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# A FUTURE LIFE?

BY

SINGLETON W. DAVIS

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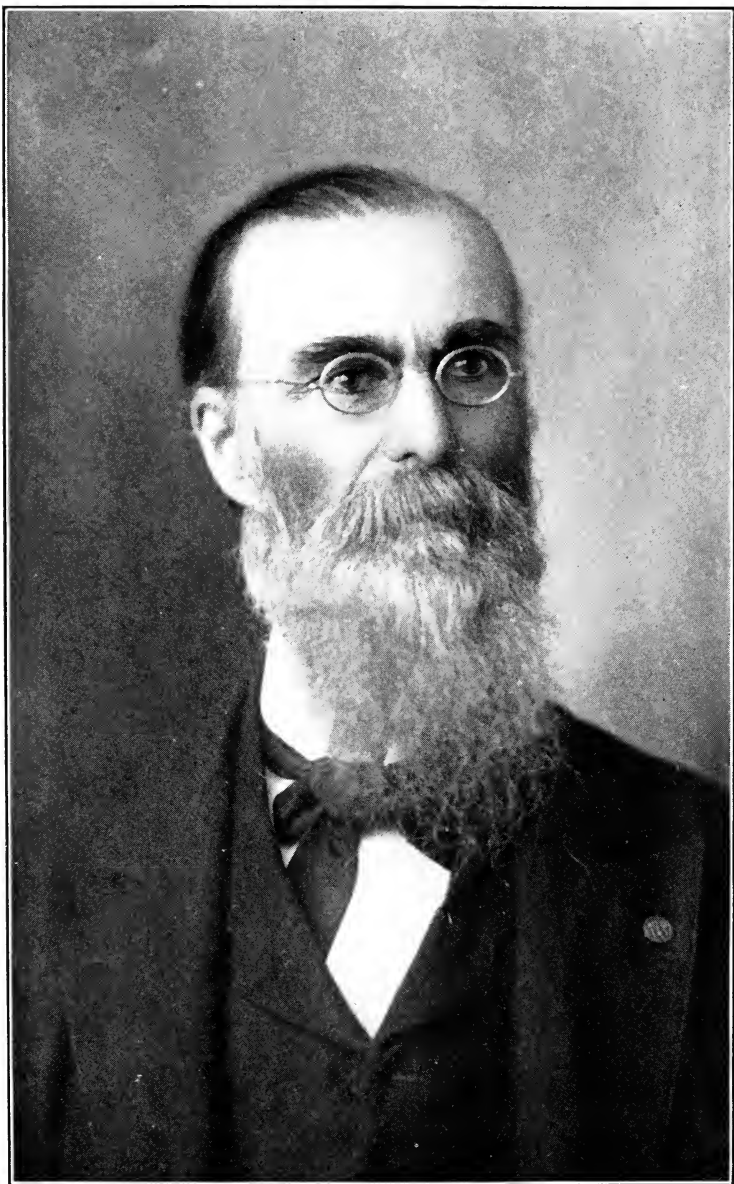
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SINGLETON WATERS DAVIS

# A FUTURE LIFE ?

A CRITICAL INQUIRY INTO THE SCIENTIFIC  
VALUE OF THE ALLEGED EVIDENCES  
THAT MAN'S CONSCIOUS PER-  
SONALITY SURVIVES THE  
LIFE OF THE BODY

EMBRACING

A DISCUSSION OF THE DOCTRINES OF RESURRECTION  
OF THE BODY, RE-INCARNATION, SPIRITISM,  
ANNIHILATION, THEORIES OF META-  
PHYSICIANS, PHENOMENA OF  
SPIRITUALISM, ETC.

BY

SINGLETON WATERS DAVIS, M. D.

Author of *The Scientific Dispensation of a New Religion*,  
Editor of *The Humanitarian Review*, etc.

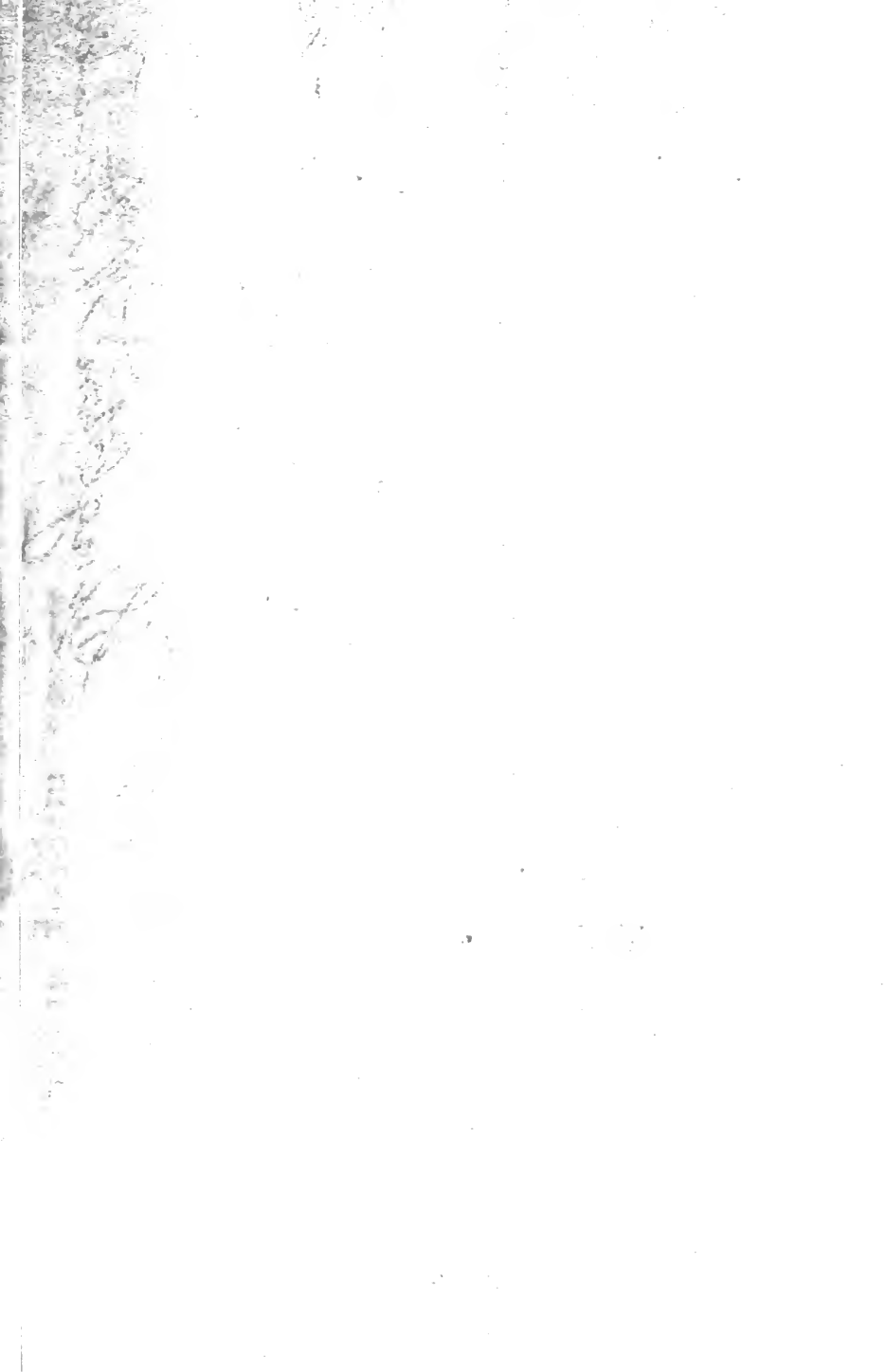


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1907.

**Q** To the Genius of Science, calm and brave, who, holding high the Torch of Reason, ascends the Heights of Knowledge on the Stepping-stones of Solid Facts to the Blazing Temple of Wisdom built upon the Eternal Rock of Truth, this Book is reverentially Dedicated by Her faithful disciple,

The Author.





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## PREFACE.

¶ In my position as editor of "The Humanitarian Review"—a magazine professedly "devoted to the study of [among other things] mind and psychic phenomena"—I had been often asked by correspondents to state my "belief," or my opinion, as to the existence of a human "spirit" entity and of a "future life" after death. But, considering mere belief and opinions of little importance, I preferred not to publish any response until I could have time to make a deliberate, well-considered, comprehensive statement of the facts and principles upon which my belief and opinions rest, as of immeasurably more importance to others than such belief and opinions themselves. At length the requests seemed to merge into demands, and I decided to publish a short series of articles, in response, in "The Review," but not so comprehensive in scope and minute in details, because of limited space in the magazine, as the importance of the subject really deserved.

¶ The First Paper of the series was printed in "The Review" of May, 1906, with the intention of limiting the series to the monthly issues of that year, but the papers were so well received from the very first that I concluded to modify my plan so as to extend the series some three months longer. And in response to requests and suggestions of many approving readers, I decided to issue the series in "pamphlet form" as soon as through the magazine. But, as each succeeding paper appeared, the interest of readers became more and more general and intense—as inferred from letters from "Review" correspondents.

¶ This enthusiastic interest of readers in the discussion of course affected the author, and I again modi-

fied my plans so as to make the articles more elaborate in detail, broader in scope and extended in number, so that instead of the series ending in the magazine of December, 1906, as first planned, the articles were made longer and continued into the number for August, 1907. This seemed to make necessary a change of my intention of printing a pamphlet edition to a decision to publish the complete series in a cloth-bound book. And I hope readers will be pleased to have the work thus given a more elegant and durable dress.

¶ These several changes of plan while the papers were in process of publication have left their marks upon the work as a whole, in the way of repetitions, reversions, want of symmetry, etc. These defects would probably have been to a great extent avoided, could I have planned the work originally to be so elaborate and extended. Some other things which mar the work somewhat, such as typographical errors, crudeness of expression, etc., might have been measurably less had not my labor as editor, publisher and printer of "The Review" been so very exacting of my time and physical strength.

¶ As for the facts and principles brought forward in the work, I have been scrupulously careful to state them in the clearest, strongest, least ambiguous words and phraseology I could select, and the reasoning I have conscientiously endeavored to make rigorously logical, wholly regardless of results as to my desires and cherished preconceptions. If you, reader, can peruse its pages in a similar frame of mind, you will enjoy the reading of them as I have intensely enjoyed—not writing, but—putting them into type direct from my mind.

SINGLETON W. DAVIS.

Los Angeles, July 22, 1907.

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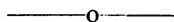
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# A FUTURE LIFE?



## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

#### § 1.—A CHILDISH DELUSION.

**M**AN, in his natural egotism, has assumed that he is of supreme importance in the infinite universe; that the gods or a god, or an immanent intelligence and beneficence, planned, built and set in motion the almighty cosmos of matter, from the less than microscopic indivisible atom to the grandest sun in all of the galaxy of the stars, with the prime object and purpose of subserviency to him; that "while all things shall pass away" into eternal nothingness, he alone of all created things and beings, in some state, shall live forever!

But, though his egotism *is* "monumental" and his conceptions of his environment and the cosmic order are extremely childish when viewed from a scientific standpoint, we shall not berate him, or censure him, or cast him down from his *real* altitude in the scale of nature; for from this same scientific view-point we see that in intellectual development he *is* a child and must think in childish terms, and that his conceptions are the natural and legitimate productions of his organism and its inheritance and environment. We see an infant try to pick up a sunbeam, or

to grasp a beautiful butterfly far above the reach of its little arm, but we do not reproach it or ridicule . ; we but smile and caress it, and wonder at its ingenuosness. So reader, while you read these pages, and feel a temptation to be harshly critical and censorious of this writer, please keep in mind not only that the race is intellectually a family of children, but that I who write (with the printer's pencil—metal type) am one of that family, and do not presume to profess that I have reached intellectual manhood while all my brothers and sisters are yet little children; I claim only to have reached the top of a little hill on my path of life which seems to afford me somewhat of a vantage over *some*, at least, of my "fellow-travelers in this vale of " mirages, as to point of view.

#### § 2.—THE REAL QUESTION.

When the sincere but simple-minded child of the soil, or the sage of the great university, asks, "If a man die, shall he live again?" we should not answer dogmatically, nor by a mere "play upon words," as is almost if not quite always done; and so believing, I herein shall try to *say exactly what I mean*, and hope that the reader will accept what I say as "bread," not "a stone"—as sincere expression; and I shall try to present that which I conceive to be the truth, not on the ground that it is the truth because I believe it is, or say it is, but because it is affirmed by the *facts of nature* which I shall cite as evidence.

What is the *real* question? It is not as to the mere resuscitation of the body or of the mind or "soul," after the event we call death, but it is this: Does the human *personality* continue to exist after death? That is, is there a tomorrow to this life considered as today and death as its night? If this life is a summer-time and death a win-

ter, will that winter end and we enter upon another summer, or another day, fully conscious of our life's former summer, or of its yesterday? Shall we awaken after death with the knowledge that we lived before death, and with remembrance of the events and associations of that previous life, as we may awake tomorrow morning with the life of today not only remembered but with consciousness of identity and continuity of personality? Any other kind of a "future life" would practically be the life of another being, and of no more interest to us now than is that of the earth-life of a person who is to be born a thousand years hence.

§ 3.—THREE THEORIES OF A FUTURE LIFE.

There are in existence now and have been for thousands of years, three principal and quite distinct theories of a future life, or continuity of life after death. These are :

(a) The material body may pass directly out of this world into another without death, in exceptional cases, or it may die and at some future time be resurrected and then pass into another world, and there live forever. For convenience, I shall call this the *Resurrection Theory*.

(b) The "spirit" or the "soul" leaves the body at the death of the latter and enters upon another life in the body of another parentage, human or animal. This, I call the *Re-incarnation Theory*,—although there are two phases of it : the notion of transmigration and that of re-incarnation proper.

(c) The body at death passes to final dissolution while the "soul" or "spirit," the *ego* or personality, passes into another state of conscious existence, there, or in succeeding states, to continue forever. This, in all of its variations, I shall call the *Spiritistic Theory*.

(x) As opposed to each and all of these theories of a future life, is the theory that the phenomena of life, including mind or thought, emotion, etc., are the products of the nervous tissues and organs of the living body, and as such, cease at the death of the body; consciousness and personality being the result of the correlative and concurrent activities of the organism, they become extinct at death. This, I shall call the *Monistic Theory*.

In this discussion of the question of a future life I shall take up the above four principal propositions in the order there indicated by letters, and devote a chapter to each. But before proceeding to discuss these theories, I will briefly consider a few fundamental facts of biological science which I think must be relied upon as a basis for intelligent inquiry into the merits and demerits of these theories—a solid foundation for a carefully-built superstructure—a firm fulcrum for the sure support of an effective lever of logical reasoning, iconoclastic and constructive. To this end let us first inquire,

#### § 4.—OF WHAT DOES THE HUMAN BODY CONSIST?

The most apparent fact as to the structure of the human body is that it consists of a multiplicity of parts so joined together and inter-related that while each does its own peculiar duty, to which it is specifically adapted, they all act for the common welfare. The action of the lungs in supplying the oxygen to the blood and ejecting the carbon from the vital domain, is absolutely essential to the life and integrity of every other part, organ or tissue; the action of the heart and blood-vessels is indispensable to each and every part; the brain and sense-motor nerves contribute not alone to their own welfare, but to that of the entire body. It may be stated as a biological

law, that *Each part of the human body acts for the good of the whole*. And it is this essential co-operation of its various and very dissimilar parts—tissues and organs—that constitutes the whole an *Individual*—an indivisible unit. “But,” says one, “there are certain parts or organs whose functions are intended not for the good of the individual of whom they are parts, but for the production of progeny and its sustenance in infancy, and this seems to prove that your ‘law’ is not a general law.”

Your view is not broad enough. The individual is itself a part of a greater *Individual*—the race, Humanity. It is this larger individual to which the last word in the above statement of the law, “the whole,” applies. It is these propagating organs of the lesser individuals which materially or corporeally unite them together to constitute the greater individual, making a material solidarity of the race. But more: The human body is itself but a community of very small individuals, called cells, each of which is born, lives, propagates others of its kind, acts in general for the good of the whole community of cells, the human body, and at length dies and is dissolved. A man, then, is a compound individual, *a community of individuals*, a microcosm of cells as the race is a macrocosm of men. This is what the human body is, organically.

#### § 5.—ULTIMATE CONSTITUENTS OF THE BODY.

But this is not the last analysis. The cells themselves are complex; all of the living tissues are compounds of well-known simple chemical elements. Strictly speaking, the earth’s surface is at the top of the sky, for our atmosphere is just as properly a part of the globe as is the ocean. The earth, then, is about three-fourths air and water. The elements that principally constitute the mechanical mixture forming the atmosphere are oxygen

and nitrogen; and the elements constituting the chemical compound called water are oxygen and hydrogen. Besides, these three elements are constituents of very much of the solid portion of the globe, so that the earth is approximately four-fifths oxygen, hydrogen and nitrogen, though carbon is one of its most important constituents, and some sixty other elements, enter more or less into its composition.

Now, it is a somewhat curious fact that this statement of the earth's chemical constituency is almost exactly true of the human body! A man, chemically, is almost wholly constituted of oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen and carbon, with comparatively small quantities of a number of other chemical elements, as calcium (lime), phosphorus, sodium, iron, etc. The constituency of the human body resembles that of the earth in another way: like the earth, the body is *chiefly water*, and it is surrounded with atmospheric air, like the body of the earth, which is not only indispensable as breath, but equally so as a means of proper *surface pressure*, for without this pressure no human being could live a single moment.

The human body, then, is an epitome of the earth, and another curious fact is, that this identity of constituency of a man and the earth was probably known by the inhabitants of the valleys of the Nile and of the Tigris and Euphrates more than ten thousand years ago, and possibly more than twenty thousand. Their traditions and the oldest tablet writings and temple inscriptions teach us that they believed that the gods made man of clay, as a potter moulds his handiwork; and in Genesis we are told that the "man" created "in the beginning" was by Elohim (the gods) called *Adam*, which means earth, or

"red earth," that is, earth void of vegetation—clay. But in making this reference to Genesis I do not mean to convey the idea that I believe man learned of this similarity of the human body to the earth in a supernatural manner, but that probably there existed a prehistoric civilization in which science was brought to a high state of perfection, and that these records made in a later age are but fossils—the decaying remains of real science degenerated into superstition along with natural decay of the race or peoples who developed it and then, having reached the noonday of human developmentability (to coin a needed word), went down to the evening when their sun of science set and the long night of an age of superstition succeeded. That astronomy ages ago was a science is shown by Sir Norman Lockyer, and I believe the Ptolemaic system was but an imperfect fossil of a far more ancient scientific astronomy.

This reference to the ancient ideas is not a digression, for I expect to show later in this discussion that modern notions of re-incarnation and the resurrection of the body are but thought fossils, or degenerate very ancient scientific knowledge of the chemical constituency of the body and of the earth, and of the transmigrations of the chemical elements through numberless successive bodies, as our chemistry and physiology of today demonstrates, and of the astronomical movements and cycles.

#### § 6.—MIND, SOUL, SPIRIT—WHAT?

A large majority of intelligent, educated people think of a man as a duality or a trinity, while a very respectable minority, many of them advanced scientists, believe that a man is really an "individual." The former believe a man consists of a material body inhabited by an imma-

terial something, by some called "soul" or "spirit," and by others "mind," considered as an entity, while others think mind and soul or spirit are not the same thing, and some believe soul and spirit are not the same.

The original notion of spirit seems to have been *that which causes movement*, and with that notion was the belief that matter in and of itself was "dead"—incapable of moving. When the wind does not blow, the tree stands apparently motionless, the dry leaves lie still upon the ground, the sea is placid; and when no air as breath enters the nostrils of man or beast they lie motionless in death. The word spirit is from a Greek word meaning air, wind or breath—whence our word *inspire*, to take in breath. So the writer of Genesis said: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and *breathed* into his nostrils the *breath* of life; and man became a living *soul*." (ii:7.) He says, "the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters," meaning, originally, that when "the earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep," mighty winds swept over "the face of the waters" and so added to the weird disorder of the primeval chaos. And so of other ancient writings and inscriptions.

Gradually, in the course of thousands of years, this purely materialistic conception of the nature of the cause of movement, "spirit" of the spiritists and "force" of the physicists, has to some extent been supplanted by a hazy conception of an indefinable "immaterial" entity "back of matter," or "behind" it, or "within" it, which is assigned as the cause of motion or action (phenomena),—on the one hand called the "spirit" of man and the "God" of nature, on the other, called "vitality" and the "forces



of nature." Even so, we still frequently hear and read of spirit as "a finer state of matter," a thing capable of reflecting light so as to be seen or photographed, and of the "vital fluid," "nervous fluid," "electric fluid," and even of the "dissipation" of light and heat into absolute vacuity of space, just as though these "modes of motion" were rarefied matter like the water in evaporation being "dissipated" from the sea into the atmosphere! Such notions I venture to call ridiculously crude, though in many cases reputed scientists still entertain them.

Some people use the word spirit as synonymous with mind, while others speak of "mortal mind" as being far inferior to spirit; and some use the words soul and spirit as synonymous, while others think the soul and the spirit are two quite distinct entities. But while everyone knows what is meant by the word mind, the words spirit and soul convey to no one a clear idea of what is meant by the speaker or writer who uses them. Yet, I shall use these terms in this discussion, but with the understanding that each reader is free to give them his own interpretation.

#### § 7.—PERSONALITY—THE EGO.

In any discussion of any theory of a future life, it is essential that we have a clear idea of what constitutes personality, for, as was shown in §2, any future existence which is not either a continuance or a resumption of the personality after death, is of no practical or personal interest to us. What is it, then, that is represented by *I* and *me*? We have seen (§4) that a man is a community of lesser individuals, all, in general, contributing to the common welfare. This unity of motive and action forms a solidarity that is the basis of personality, but something is needed to complete the personality, and that is a brain

center in which all of the constituents of such community merge their individualities into a common unit. To illustrate: The two eyes each receive a distinct and slightly different image of an object upon the retina, but the optic nerves from both retinas intermingle the little strands of which they are composed so completely between the eyes and the sight center in the brain that the two images are there merged into one, and we "see single." So must be merged into unity all of the components of the man, which is done by the whole system of nerves concentrating in the one great merger, the brain; and, as the action of the two eyes is merged into one *perception*, so the action of all the components of the whole body is merged into one *consciousness*, and this unity and consciousness of it constitutes the *ego*, the *personality*. As long as the integrity of the unitizing nerves and great brain-center is maintained, consciousness and personality continue; otherwise they cannot, and universal experience and observation prove to the common sense of all that this is true. The continuance of conscious personality after death and dissolution of the body can be conceived of as possible only upon the theory that the mind, soul or spirit is an entity and not subject to the physical and chemical laws which render death and dissolution of the body inevitable. This theory will be quite fully discussed in the chapters on re-incarnation and spiritism.

#### § 8.—INDESTRUCTIBILITY OF MATTER AND MOTION.

Modern scientists affirm the indestructibility of matter, although the proposition does not admit of demonstration. It is assumed to be true because there is not a single known fact against it—not an iota of matter has ever been known to pass from existence to nothingness;

and the human mind in reality is incapable of conceiving of such annihilation, though many have "believed" that in ordinary fire the fuel is to a large extent utterly annihilated. The theological notion of the final destruction of the world by fire implies that "all things shall pass" into utter nothingness, but the modern scientist knows that if all the forests upon the earth and all the coal and oil within it were to be burned, that not a single grain of their elementary constituents would be destroyed. This indestructibility of matter is often cited as evidence that man is immortal, and when I come to discuss spiritism, in another chapter, I will try to show the fallacy of that argument. Not so clearly recognized but equally true as the indestructibility of matter, is the persistence of motion—that motion cannot be annihilated, but assumes different modes under varying conditions. And a correlative proposition, equally true, is this: that neither matter nor motion is ever initiated—"created" out of nothing, but that the precedent of every new *form* of matter was another form, and of every new *mode* of motion was another mode. The connection of all this with the question of a future life may not be here very apparent to the reader, but its relevancy will plainly appear later on in this discussion.

#### § 9.—TRANSMUTATION OF COMPLEX SUBSTANCES.

All groups or bodies of matter composed of two or more elements chemically combined, and all masses of matter of one or more elements mechanically maintained, are unstable and more or less ephemeral. Incessant change of relationship of the simple elements, ultimate particles and masses of matter is the order of the universe, and it may be stated as a general truth ("law"), that *the more*

*complex the mass or body, the less stable the union of its elements.* The ultimate indivisible particle of the simple chemical element, if such there be, is the only thing in the universe which is absolutely indestructible and eternal in duration.

§ 10.—DEATH.

What is death? Some quibblers say there is no death; other quibblers say all matter is alive. Both take unwarranted liberties with words. A growing tree is live matter; cut down, sawed into lumber and seasoned, it is dead matter; thoroughly dissolved by decay, it is neither alive nor dead. The skin of the living ox is live matter; the leather in your shoes is dead matter; the iron nails in your shoes is neither living nor dead matter. It is literally true that "in the midst of life we are in death." With the first breath of the new-born infant, death within its little body begins, and its first exhalation carries out a portion of its dead body! And thence on death is in fellowship with life until the last breath is taken, when death is supreme and life is naught. It is this incessant dying of the little ephemeral individuals of the human community—the body, that supplies the power of living action, and causes the demand for food and drink out of which to build new cells to take the place of those which die, and so through every moment of a man's lifetime he is dying and throwing out of his living body of one moment his dead body of the moment preceding.

What becomes of this matter after its ejection from the body? It goes to help fill the sea, to make the soil of the land; to the sky to fall again as rain; to the atmosphere to supply it with carbon and nitrogen—food for briars and roses, thistles and figs, weeds and wheat; and then,

food for worms and birds, cattle and—men! Yes we are not only descendants of our forefathers, but we are literally, to some extent, *resurrections* and *re-carnations* of the elementary matter which composed their bodies, and even our own of past years and of yesterday! But—does conscious personality survive the final death of the body?

This question will be discussed in succeeding chapters of this work, but it is not the author's object to make a direct attempt to prove that man is destined to a life beyond the death of the body, nor yet that he is not; but, rather, it is his aim to give, from the scientific standpoint, a comprehensive survey of the grounds upon which the various forms of belief in a future life are based. If the reader finds confirmation, or if he finds refutation herein, let him remember that this author did not create the facts—he only tried to “hold a mirror up to nature” to truly reflect them.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE RESURRECTION THEORY.

#### § 11.—ORIGIN OF THE THEORY.

“And the graves were opened; and many BODIES of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection.”—Matt. xxvii:52-53.

“Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.”—Luke xxiv:39.

**W**HENCE came into the mind of man the notion that after the death of his body he should sometime and somewhere resume life in that same body?

The belief in the resurrection of the body is older than history, almost as widespread as the race itself, and persists in the minds of millions of people today in the face of modern science. Not the ignorant and simple-minded only believe in the resurrection of the body, but people who have brains and education—even those familiar with science—many of them, believe in it; professors in our great colleges and universities, learned authors, priests, preachers, kings, popes, and presidents of the United States, believe in this theory. Why? Because it is apparently reasonable and is supported by “authority.”

Here is the logical chain that binds even learned men to this belief: The Bible is the infallible word of an omniscient and absolutely truthful being; the Bible tells us not only that the dead body *shall be* resurrected, but that many dead bodies *have been* resurrected. (See the New

Testament for the doctrine and accounts of the "raising of Lazarus," the coming up of "many" out of the graves at the time of the crucifixion, and especially the resurrection of the body of Jesus after the crucifixion.) The logic is correct as to the deduction; but is the major premise true?—*is* the Bible the word of an infallible being? Why do learned men believe it is? Because they are hypnotized by a million-time suggestion from infancy to old age. *Suggestion* rules the world! And the seed of suggestion is repetition and the "good ground" in which it germinates most perfectly is childhood. Suggestion is a mighty god whose altar is "the mother's knee," whose temple is the home and the school house and the church; whose priests are the parents, the pedagogues and the preachers; and like Jehovah, he often puts into his prophets a "lying spirit." But the belief in the resurrection is not of Christian origin.

§ 12.—CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF EGYPTIAN ORIGIN.

The doctrine of the resurrection as an element of the Christian religion was not inherited from Judaism, nor was it originated by Jesus, the evangelists, or the other New Testament heroes and reputed authors. It is not an Old Testament doctrine. This feature of Christianity, like all else that distinguishes it from Judaism, is of ancient Egyptian origin, modified more or less by Grecian philosophy and poetry. Take the Græco-Egyptian elements out of Christianity, the residue is Judaism; take away its Judaistic elements, the residue is Græco-Egyptian paganism. Comparison of the Judaistic, Egyptian and Greek mythologies with the the Christian doctrines, legends and rites, demonstrates this.

Not only do Egyptian records and art relics, but their

custom of mummification, prove that the Egyptians from pre-historic times believed in the resurrection of the body. Whence or how did they get the idea?

§ 13.—A REVELATION BY THE SUN-GOD.

Analogy in Egyptian theology held a place corresponding to induction in modern science. The fundamental principles or premises of the Egyptian and other ancient mythologies are these: Man is an epitome of the universe; Human life, death and resurrection is an analogue of the apparent movement of the sun in a period of one day and night and of one solar year; The sun being an anthropomorphous god, the phenomena of his daily and yearly birth (at sunrise and winter solstice), growth, power (at noon and summer solstice), decline, death (at sunset and autumnal equinox), and *resurrection* (at sunrise and the vernal equinox), corresponds to a human life—and thus the sun-god reveals, by analogy, that man, like his god, is born, lives, dies and rises again. Hence, even now the “evening of life,” the “winter” and “night of death,” the “resurrection *morn*,” etc., are common expressions.

Then, the phenomena of general life in the course of a year, by analogy, seemed to demonstrate to the poetic Egyptian mind the truth of the theory of the resurrection. In the spring Mother Earth gives birth to a new vegetation; the flocks of the shepherds bring forth their lambs at and about the time of the spring equinox; it is then appears the new-born ox an ass; then the birds lay their eggs and the birdlings are born: it is then the honey-bees swarm out and start new families—then, life is born. In mid-summer the growth of vegetation in general has grown up to its accustomed limit, and in autumn it dies and the seed is buried in the ground, and the ani-



mal world as to its activity is, metaphorically, dead and buried in the grave of winter. Then, varying the poetic fancy (which to the oriental intellect is science), when spring comes again, the grave of winter opens and all life is *re-surrected*, the earth is decked with blossoms, the lord of heaven, the sun, "rises again" from the grave below the equator, 'tis the morning of the new year, the "resurrection morn," and the time for the glad Easter festival!

§ 14.—THE BODY TRANSFORMED.

Do you not see here where Paul got his argument for the resurrection, when he exclaims in confident triumph that the new plant cannot come forth unless the seed first die? And here he got his idea of being "raised a spiritual body," for though he was held by the ancient myth-philosophy to the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, some faint rays of the dawn of modern science showed him that the new plant resurrected was not actually the identical one of the previous year from which it sprang, and to maintain his argument by strict analogy he was compelled to introduce the supplementary theory of the new body. He had no conception of a human "spirit" or "soul" living without a body of some kind.

§ 15.—RELATION OF THE SPIRIT TO THE RESURRECTION.

But though the apostle (extending his similitude) says, "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body" (1. Cor. xv:44), it is evident from his attempted explanation of the resurrection in the fifteenth chapter of 1. Corinthians that he believed the "spiritual body" was the "natural body" transformed at the time of its resurrection, and the "sowing" of the body was essential as seed

—"bare grain"—from which the spiritual body as a new plant should be "raised." In this statement of his theory of the resurrection, Paul (or, rather, the writer of the Pauline epistles) shows plainly the combination of two more ancient original elements of the Christian doctrine, the Egyptian and the Grecian.

In Egyptian inscriptions and statuary the spirit or the "soul" is symbolized by a winged, bird-like form. In some of the tombs have been found statues of the "soul" posed as if keeping guard over the mummy of the body which it occupied before death. The object of mummification and this guardianship was evidently to make sure that the soul would be able to find and re-enter its body at the resurrection. The belief of certain Christian sects today that the soul remains in the grave with the body until the resurrection is undoubtedly, I think, a heritage of the old pagan notion symbolized by the soul-bird in the tomb. But this was not exactly Paul's theory. The Greeks likened the living body to the larva (caterpillar), the dead body to the chrysalis lying in the ground during winter, and the soul to the butterfly that is resurrected from the chrysalis. Indeed the very word soul in Greek, *psyche*, is literally a butterfly. The larva and chrysalis correspond to Paul's "natural body" and the butterfly to his "spiritual body." And here is the origin of the Christian notion that we shall have wings after the resurrection!

#### § 16.—THE "NEW THEOLOGY" THEORIES.

The influence of modern science has affected the opinions of many of the more intelligent, learned, progressive Christians as to this as well as all other dogmas of their old creeds, and the representatives of what is sometimes

called the new theology are attempting to "harmonize science and religion" as to the doctrine of the resurrection by putting a "spiritual" in place of the older literal interpretation of the New Testament declaration on the subjects. These new explanations are theological boomerangs that strike back at the entire Christian system, old and new, by exciting suspicion in the minds of people both in and out of the churches that the creeds are unreliable and the scriptures they purport to epitomize are ambiguous or utterly fallacious.

Some Christian theologians tell us that the resurrection of Jesus was spiritual, not corporeal; that his body did not literally awaken from actual death and ascend skyward to a place "above" the earth. And yet it is reported by the Evangelist that when Jesus "appeared" to his disciples they "supposed they had seen a spirit," and that to convince them that it was *not* a spirit but a body of literal, material flesh and bones which they saw, Jesus said to them: "Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." And to make the demonstration more complete, he then ate "a piece of a broiled fish, and of a honeycomb." Luke xxiv:39-42, 43. Then it is related (v. 51) that "he was parted from them and carried up into heaven." If Jesus rose not bodily, but his spirit arose on the third day, are we to believe his spirit lay three days in the sepulchre? The gospels say unequivocally that Jesus "gave up the ghost" while on the cross and that the *body* arose from the dead.

This is the old-fashioned doctrine—the Egyptian form of the belief; but Paul, with his Greek modification of the resurrection theory, directly and unconditionally contradicts it in these words: "Flesh and blood cannot in-

herit the kingdom of God." 1. Cor. xv:50.

§ 17.—SCIENCE DISPELS THE ILLUSIONS.

That which distinguishes science from ordinary deductions of superficial observers and analogists is, besides its orderly arrangements of facts and its inductive method, is its disillusionment—its ability to distinguish the real from the merely apparent. A familiar illustration of this is furnished by astronomy in demonstrating the immense distances between the earth and the heavenly bodies and the almost infinite difference in these distances as opposed to their apparently short and equal distance "above" the earth and their nearness to one another; another, by the demonstration of the earth's spherical form and its axial and orbital movement, as opposed to its apparent flatness and fixedness; another, the immense size of the heavenly bodies as opposed to their apparent diminutiveness; and another, that the sun, moon and stars do not move from east to west over or around the earth, as they appear to do, but that the moon only, moves around the earth, and that from west to east once in about twenty-eight days, instead of from east to west in about twenty-five hours.

Science dispels quite effectually the Pauline illusion of a close analogy between the sowing of seed and the burial of the dead, the germination of the seed and the death and decay of the corpse, or the coming-up of a new plant and the resurrection of a new or spiritual body from the dead and decayed "natural" one in the grave. Science shows that the human body dissolves after death into inorganic chemical elements and non-living compounds—is wholly destroyed and distributed to the soil, the sea, and the atmosphere, to be again assimilated by plants, and thence on again as components of animal and other

human bodies, in a limitless revolution. Science shows us that the seed when planted does not "die," but sets up a more rapid life-action—awakes from a comparatively dormant condition, a kind of hibernation, just as the living buds on the deciduous trees do in the spring after a season of hibernation through the winter; the seed being a bud surrounded by a supply of prepared nutriment sufficient to build up the new plant until it has made adequate root-connections with the soil and leaf-connections with the air to enable it to take its sustenance directly from these sources. Paul exclaims: "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die." 1. Cor. xv:36. But science convinces us that if the seed that has been sown die—if the germ die and its accompanying store of prepared nutriment rot, the seed *will not* and *can not* be "quickened." Paul may not himself have been a "fool" in making this remark, but he was more ignorant of plant life than the children in the lower grades of our common schools, and "inspiration" did not enlighten him.

§ 18.—A PARADOXICAL IMMORTALITY.

Science is equally destructive as to the butterfly illusion. There is no analogy between the transformation of a larva into the chrysalis state and the death of the human body. The larva and chrysalis correspond somewhat to the pre-natal life of the human, and the coming forth of the butterfly corresponds to the birth of a living human being, not to a resurrection of either a dead body or of the soul or spirit from the dead body. The butterfly is simply the mature insect—the adult stage, in which the male and female consort and the eggs are laid for the propagation of the species; larvæ or caterpillars can no more reproduce their kind than can the human embryo.

If this Greek supposed-analogy be carried out logically, we should be forced to assume that all babies are born after the death and resurrection of their parents! And as for immortality, this analogy is wholly discouraging; for the life of the butterfly is one of but a few hours, and then it dies of old age like the "natural body" of a man. To be resurrected to an immortality analogous to the life of a butterfly, or that of next year's grain-stalk, would be farcical and unworthy of the name, for it would be a life of mixed pleasure and pain, like the present, and grim Death would quickly call again to repeat his tragedy.

The truth is, that the analogy between any and all of the events and phenomena of human existence and those of wheat or caterpillar-butterfly existence, so far as science reveals it, pertains strictly to the here and now, the material and natural, the mutable and mortal, and *all* bodies are "natural," and none "spiritual" but (etymologically) the atmosphere.

§ 19.—MATERIAL BASIS OF THE THEORY'S ORIGIN.

In § 5, I expressed my opinion that there may have been one or more prehistoric periods of scientific achievement nearly, if not quite, as great as that of the present—and possibly even greater, in some respects at least. There are certain philological and psychological fossils that indicate that such opinion has some foundation; and one of these psychological (or mental) fossils is the vague theory of the resurrection of the body. If we conceive of the race life as being wave-like in its advancement, we can see that humanity, in the course of millions of years, is carried, under evolutionary laws, not in a straight line of progress onward and upward, but alternately down into the troughs and up onto the crests of the waves of

progress. To my mind, evolution pictures the progress of the human race as a man coming out of the primordial protoplasm in the ooze at the bottom of the ancient ocean and out upon the eastern coast of a continent; thence westward taking his way overland, now down into a valley and then up onto a hill or mountain, toward the western coast; today he is crossing a ridge of the "Rocky Mountains," and from his high scientific altitude he looks back through the telescope of evolution and sees (though he has forgotten the events) the ocean he arose from—the dark valleys and bright crests of the "Blue Ridge" of the Alleghanies and the plains and table lands of comparative mediocrity. Then he turns his scientific vision through the telescope of natural law to the westward—the future—and sees rising before him the lofty peaks of the Sierra Nevadas, with glimpses of the dark valleys intervening, and he hopes that when he ascends the highest of those lofty peaks of scientific knowledge and general development that he will be able to see still greater heights to which he shall attain; but alas! as I stand aside I see through a low pass *lower* mountains beyond—the Sierra Madre range, and beyond that, the foothills—the "Pacific Slope," down which he will peacefully go in racial decline until he enters the arid deserts and fertile fields of the Golden State—the "Golden Age" of the race's "second childhood!" But what is that I see beyond? O, it is another ocean!—the great Pacific, fit symbol of an eternal future "pacific" oblivion! As he came up out of the stormy Atlantic of the eternal past, so at last he will go down into an ocean of infinite futurity; but *it* is the *Pacific* ocean—an eternity of calm, of PEACE!

Mistake not my meaning; *this* is given as a picture of the *race's* term of existence as a part of the animal world,

not of the individual's existence. I have not thus prematurely arrived at the end of my story.

So, viewing the probable progress of man in this light, I think the belief in the resurrection of the body may, at least in some degree, be a fossil—a degeneration of a pre-historic biological and chemical science which had clearly discerned the phenomena and laws of the alternate and constant chemical and vital integration and disintegration in which the material elementary substances composing a human body are the very same that have, in other combinations, served as components of other preceding human bodies. The scientific resurrection, the resurrection of the *atom*, pertains to this life and this world only; and this brings me into touch with the subject of my next chapter, the Re-Incarnation Theory.



### CHAPTER III.

#### RE-INCARNATION --- METEMPSYCHOSIS --- TRANSMIGRATION OF SOULS.

The soul that rises with us, our life's star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting.—*Wordsworth*.

#### § 20.—OBSCURE TERMINOLOGY.

ONE of the essentials of science is definite terminology. Words and sentences which clearly and definitely convey to the hearer or reader the meaning of the speaker or writer are the very best evidence that the person who thus expressed his thought was a clear and orderly thinker upon that theme; and the use of indefinite, obscure or ambiguous terms and sentences are just as sure evidence that the user of them had not himself a clear and well-defined mental view of his subject-matter.

In many cases obscure expression, though the sequence of misty thought, the fault is not that the thinker himself is incapable of clear thinking upon even intricate and comprehensive questions, but is traceable to incongruity of the elements of the hypotheses upon which the thinker bases his ratiocination. One cannot hand to another a cup of clear water from a muddy spring.

Still another source of obscure expression is the variability of the meaning of words, and the borrowing of those having definite meaning in one department of investigation or thought for use in a very dissimilar department without carefully indicating what modifications of meaning the old terms are intended to convey in their new field of use. And such use has a reflex action that

tends to not only obscurity but to actual vicious changes resulting in positive error. Take for instance, the word "fluid." In its old and ordinary use the word conveys a very definite idea of a certain state of matter. But when discoveries in magnetism and electricity were made, the students in the new branches of scientific inquiry chose to borrow rather than to invent a convenient term to express the idea of movement along certain lines of least resistance, along so-called conductors, and so selected the word "fluid" and established the misleading phrases "electric fluid" and "magnetic fluid," which have done great harm by conveying a false notion of the nature of these "modes of motion"—the notion that they are matter in fluid state.

In the theory of re-incarnation as variously expounded under the names palingenesis or re-incarnation, metempsychosis, transmigration of the soul, etc., the mysticism and vagueness of the original ideas resulted in the use of indefinite, undefined terms, which in turn reacted to still more distract and obscure and vary the theory. This variation is so great that in one sense or interpretation of the chief terms the theory is that of the crudest barbarian dreamer and in another sense or interpretation a logical conclusion of modern scientific induction, accepted even by such a positive physicist as Huxley, whom I will quote a little later in this chapter.

#### § 21.—VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE THEORY.

Perhaps the crudest and simplest form of the theory of re-incarnation is that in which the "soul" is conceived of as a kind of being of extremely fine or rarified matter which inhabits a body of a "coarser" kind of matter as its "earthly house or tabernacle," for the purposes of ob-

taining experience, discipline, education and development, so as to prepare the soul for existence in some sort of higher sphere in another world; and that to gain adequate qualifications for life in such higher sphere it is necessary that the soul pass through a long series of incarnations or fleshly embodiments. To this end a soul may pass an earthly life in a low animal or even plant, be re-incarnated or "born again" at the death of the body into another body, perhaps animal or human, and so repeated and continued for thousands of years, until the soul has been thoroughly disciplined and prepared for promotion to a "higher sphere" of existence.

§ 22.—ORIGIN OF THE DOCTRINE.

As to the origin of the notion of transmigration and re-incarnation, we have nothing of a historical nature, and the very earliest writings and inscriptions of the misty past indicate that a large proportion of mankind have from prehistoric time believed in some kind of re-incarnation. Though a doctrine of Buddhism, it was not originated by Buddha, but accepted as an unquestionable, established part of human knowledge. And though the early Christians believed in the doctrine, it is not set forth in the New Testament as a new revelation of either Jesus or Paul or any of the other apostles, but there is evidence, granting that the N. T. records are trustworthy, that both Jesus and Paul accepted the doctrine as one that was so firmly established that no one even thought of calling it in question or of defending it. See Matt. xi:7-14 and xvii:10-13.

And the Jews previous to the Christian era believed in re-incarnation according to a number of incidental references to it in the Old Testament, though it must have

been considered of little importance. Remnants of this Jewish and early Christian belief come down to the present, the doctrine itself being "re-incarnated" in the professions of Dowie, Schlatter, Piggott and others claiming to be re-incarnations of Elijah, Jesus, John the Baptist, etc. Aside from Christianity, many modern metaphysicians and mystics profess belief in some form of the doctrine, but the Theosophists are the chief propagandists of the doctrine, as a necessary accompaniment and essential condition of "Karma."

§ 23.—THE THEOSOPHIC VIEW.

As I understand the Theosophical theory of re-incarnation the belief is that the human never retrogrades to the plane of the plant or the brute in any of its incarnations, basing this opinion on the rather sandy foundation of a radical difference between the brute and the man in that *Manas*, the thinker and immortal person, has come upon an entirely separate and distinct plane of being—a difference in kind rather than in degree. Hence Theosophists are not, technically, transmigratationists but strictly re-incarnationists, though in the Orient, the birthplace of the cult, the belief in brute and even plant re-embodiment of the human after death is and for ages has been quite extensive.

Another feature of the theory is: That re-incarnation is a ladder of progress upon which the entire material universe is climbing step by step, in the course of innumerable ages, to a state of perfection and such an adjustment of the process as a whole as shall justify every apparent wrong as being right as means to a good end under natural law. During the interval between death and a subsequent re-incarnation "the higher triad, *Manas*, *Buddhi*,

and *Atma*, who are the real man, go into another state," says Wm. Q. Judge, an authoritative theosophical writer, in his book entitled *The Ocean of Theosophy*, "which is called *Devachan* or heaven," and when that interval "is over they are attracted back to earth for re-incarnation."

Considering the acknowledged fact that there is little (really no) conscious memory of any pre-existence in any of the incarnations or the intervals in "heaven;" and so practically if not actually there is no continuity of the personality; and therefore there is no self-interest in the anticipated future heaven or earth existences, and the much-lauded *Karma* is of no individual or personal interest however much it may contribute to race or universal progress. What one wishes to know is whether he shall continue, or awake, after death the *same* person with remembrance and recognition of friends and relatives.

A "hope of heaven" which carries with it a certainty that John Smith shall there have no remembrance of his earth life, of his dear Mrs. Smith or of any of the dear little Smiths, or even of himself as John Smith of earth-life—no recognition of them or of himself "over there," is not a very joyous hope. Add to that the expectation that the life in heaven is to end, sometime, with a return to earth to re-incarnate and live as Bill Jones in this "vale of tears," and the "hope" is reduced to indifference.

It may be replied to this that sometime, when the æons of ages necessary for man to reach perfection have ended, we shall "be as gods," yet the vast extent of this preparatory period affords not cheering hope, but appalling dismay. But I am aware that such dismal prospect does not disprove the theory of re-incarnation; yet it certainly weighs heavily against the reasonableness and benefi-

cence of the scheme. One of the main "supports" of the doctrine being that it is necessary in order to justify the ending of human earth-life so much short of the realization of human aspirations and capabilities, this objection is certainly relevant as at least against the probability of the correctness of the theory.

§ 24.—"SUPPORTS" OF THE THEOSOPHIC THEORY.

But what evidence have Theosophists that their complex and pretentious scheme of re-incarnation is true to nature? It has no support as induction from facts of observation or experience, but the "supports" its believers rely upon are defective deductions and analogies. I will here summarize concisely what Mr. Judge sets forth in his *Ocean of Theosophy*, quite fully, as "supporting" the doctrine of re-incarnation as a cardinal principle of Theosophy. The author devotes a chapter to the discussion of the following "arguments" on which the theosophic theory of re-incarnation are based :

The nature of the soul (see § 20, this chapter); the laws of mind and soul; differences in character; necessity for discipline and evolution; differences in capacity and start in life at the cradle; individual identity proves it; the probable object of life makes it necessary; one life is not enough to carry out Nature's purposes. (This assuming to know what "nature's purposes" are is like that of the priest who tells us all about "God's purposes"!) Mere death confers no advance ; a school after death is illogical; the persistence of savagery and decay of nations give support to it; the appearance of geniuses is due to it (which is a plain case of begging the question); inherent ideas common to man show it.

There is no proof in any of these propositions; they

simply pertain to matters which the hypothesis of re-incarnation has been adapted to explain.

§ 25.—A SELF-DEFEATING SCHEME.

Mr. Judge says: "Individuals and nations in definite streams return in regularly recurring periods [cycles] to the earth, and thus bring back to the globe the arts, the civilization, the very persons who once were on it at work." If that is true, how can there be the progress in the arts, civilization and personality which Mr. Judge says is the object of re-incarnation? The old truism, "A stream can rise no higher than its source," is pertinent here. Such a scheme of re-incarnations would defeat its own purposes.

§ 26.—A NON-CONSOLING HOPE—A FRIGID HEAVEN.

According to the theosophic theory human kinship is of the material body only; the soul is parentless, and the body being mortal, parent and child "cannot meet and recognize each other after death, as their souls are not so related." Hope of such a future life is barren of about all that makes "hope of heaven" a sweet consolation.

§ 27.—BUDDHISM AND RE-INCARNATION.

According to the very ancient Indian belief in re-incarnation the continuity of life is not broken at death, but the life proceeds from death to re-birth and again to death and re-birth in constant alternation until the final dissolution of the universe after a *kalpa* of æons of ages.

Buddha did not originate, but somewhat modified this doctrine. The births of Buddha himself are usually numbered at 550, of which the later are called the great births. Prof. Waddell, in his large work, *The Buddhism of Tibet*, says of Karma: "It explains all the acts and events of one's life as the results of deeds done in previous existences, and it creates a system of rewards and punishments,

sinking the wicked through the lower stages of human and animal existence, and even to hell, and lifting the good to the level of mighty kings, and even to the gods."

§ 28.—A REAL, SCIENTIFIC RE-INCARNATION.

Notwithstanding that all of the theories of re-incarnation to which the term is usually applied are esoteric and metaphysical, there is a really scientific aspect of the subject, dependant upon a somewhat different use and interpretation of terms. And it is possible, if not probable, that the various mystical and misty views are really dim or grotesque views (more or less warped by sentiment and obscured by superstition) of the reality. In biologic science, the term heredity is used and definitely applies to all of re-incarnation that is real and scientific. The scientific aspect was well presented by Huxley in his lecture on *Evolution and Ethics*, from which I quote.

§ 29.—HUXLEY ON THE REALITY.

"Everyday experience familiarizes us with the facts which are grouped under the name of heredity. Everyone of us bears upon him obvious marks of his parentage, perhaps of remoter relationships. More particularly the sum of tendencies to act in a certain way, which we call 'character,' is often to be traced through a long series of progenitors and collaterals. So we may justly say that this 'character'—this moral and intellectual essence of a man *does veritably pass over from one fleshly tabernacle to another, and does really transmigrate*[or re-incarnate] from generation to generation. In the new-born infant the character of the stock lies latent, and the *ego* is little more than a bundle of potentialities; but, very early, these become actualities: from childhood to age they manifest themselves in dullness or brightness, in weakness or strength, viciousness or uprightness: and with each fea-



ture modified by confluence with another character, if by nothing else, the character passes on to its *re-incarnation* in new bodies. The Indian philosophers called this character *Karma*. It is this *Karma* which passed from life to life and linked them in a chain of transmigrations; and they held that it is modified in each life, not merely by confluence of parentage, but by its own acts."

Thus we see that the ancient belief in re-incarnation was based upon a sort of primitive hazy fore-view and conception of the great modern scientific theory of evolution, which inductive reasoning has developed.

## CHAPTER IV.

### SPIRITISTIC HYPOTHESES.

#### § 30.—TERMS DEFINED.

**W**HAT do you understand by the word *spiritistic*? Different persons would reply with different answers to this question, and none, perhaps, would be in exact accord with what I shall herein use the word to mean. In order, then, that the ideas which I intend to convey shall be received in their integrity by every one of my readers, I will briefly give *my* definition and ask them to accept it as their own while reading this discussion; this may forestall criticism that is mere play upon words, and also prevent confusion of ideas.

I herein use the word *spiritistic* not as a synonym of *spiritualistic*, nor as exclusively relating to the theories or phenomena of modern Spiritualism, but as expressing a broader, more comprehensive meaning. I mean by the terms Spiritistic Hypotheses of a Future Life all doctrines of a continued or renewed conscious life after death of the body which are based upon the general hypothesis that the material body actually dies and disintegrates and is never resurrected, but that an immaterial being or organism closely corresponding in parts and in whole to the material body it is supposed to have "inhabited," escapes and lives forever in a new state of existence. This embraces not only the beliefs of the Spiritualists, but a large and increasing number of the more intelligent and educated Christians and Deists.

The major premise of this doctrine is that man in this

life is a dual (some say a triune) being, body and spirit, or soul; the minor premise is that, though the body dies, the spirit is essentially immortal, and though the body is useful to it for awhile, it can and does ultimately live independently of any material counterpart or body. Admit the truth of these premises and the conclusion is logical that there is a future life for at least one component of the human duad or triad. But, are they, or either of them, true? Are they self-evident facts or inductively ascertained principles? As to the first half of the latter question, I will say that to a critical and scientific mind "self-evident" truths are exceedingly rare; in fact, to me there appears to be but two self-evident truths. One is, *I am*, the other is, *It is*: the *I* and the *not I*—me and my environment exist. All other truths must rest primarily upon these two, and secondarily upon other and collateral facts, as the keystone of an arch is supported by the other stones of the arch and all by the two bottom stones, one at the base of each half of the arch. I will, then, pass as irrelevant the "self-evident" argument and proceed to discuss the alleged scientific proofs of the dual nature of man and the indestructibility of the spirit element.

§ 31.—IS MAN A DUAD?

Though many spiritists assert that man is a triad, consisting of body, soul and spirit, I shall not here discuss the question of a difference between soul and spirit, or between the spirit and the "spiritual body," as spiritists believe both survive the death of the body. I will consider them together as one, for the arguments for the existence of both are the same. That there is a material human body, all admit—even the Christian Scientist admits it in *practice*, though he denies it in *theory*. The

question, then, is narrowed down to this: Is there a spirit in the living body? Spiritists declare there is. Let us examine the grounds of their belief.

There are three distinct reasons given for believing in the existence of a spirit entity in the living body. 1. It is revealed in the Bible; 2. The belief is universal; 3. It is necessary to account for freedom of volition and the power of initiating motion, thought etc.

§ 32.—REVELATION AS EVIDENCE.

To many people the testimony of the biblical writers is acceptable as conclusive proof; to some it is of little or no use as evidence. But whether the Bible is a message from Omniscience or is the work of finite, ignorant, semi-barbaric men, its testimony is worthless if it is inconsistent or self-contradictory. A few quotations will be enough to satisfy any rational person that the testimony of the Bible is ambiguous, inconsistent and self-contradictory. In fact it is impossible to quote much from the Bible on this subject for it does not contain much, and that little is, for the most part, merely incidental remark. The first mention of spirit is in Gen. i:2.: "And darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of Elohim (God) moved upon the face of the waters." But strictly speaking, this does not refer to a spirit being, I think, but to *winds* considered as the *breath of the gods*. In the Jehovistic cosmogony it is said (Gen. ii:7), "the Lord God . . . breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul." Here again the spirit of the Lord of the gods, or of "the god Jahveh," is represented not as a personality, but as his *breath*; and that breath naturally entered into Adam by way of his nostrils and caused him to become "a living soul." If a spirit medium

were to announce that a spirit had entered into her body through her nose the Christian scoffer would consider it to be an exceedingly ludicrous explanation, but he will read this story of the spirit of a god entering Adam's body through his nose as a dignified recital of "solemn truth!" 'Twould be blasphemy to laugh at that!

Eliphaz speaks of seeing a spirit (Job iv:15) but doesn't say that it was that of a man. It must have been a conventional "ghost," for it appeared to him "in the night, when deep sleep falleth on men," and he was so frightened that, he says, it made him tremble and his bones to shake and the hair of his flesh stand up—just as it does with everyone (they say) who sees a ghost! But ghost stories are at a discount in these days of iconoclastic science, and I am inclined to think that poor Job's friend Eliphaz was a little over-zealous and so resorted to some highly poetical embellishment of his addresses as counsellor and advocate of Jahveh. But Job himself seems to have believed that man "has a spirit or soul," for he complains, he says, (ch. vii:11), "in the bitterness of my soul" and "I will speak in the anguish of my spirit." But this is far from a positive declaration that his spirit and his soul were personal beings and not merely the emotional elements of his mind. In other places Job speaks of his soul, but always as one speaking of the emotional element of his mind.

I think it is quite evident from expressions of Job that he did not believe in any survival of the spirit after death. In fact he speaks as though it was "self-evident" that "as the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away, so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more" (vii:9), either in body or spirit, for he says "man dieth and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost [breath], and

where is he?" And that famous question, almost universally misapprehended, "If a man die, shall he live again?" is asked, not as seeking information, but as a question so palpably absurd as to afford its own answer—as much as to say that if he could die he should be forever free from his "anguish of spirit" and "bitterness of soul." (See ch. xiv. v. 14, and contexts; also, x:20-21 and xiv:12.)

But other "inspired writers" seem to contradict Job and affirm, though indirectly, that there is a spirit being in the human body that does not die with the body but passes out of it and continues to live independently. For instance, read 1Kings xvii:17-23, where Elijah persuaded Jahveh, in the case of a dead child, to "let this child's soul come into him again," "and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived." See the story of the witch of En-dor (1 Sam. xxviii:7-15), wherein it is told that the spirit of Samuel, who was dead, communicated, exactly in the manner of modern Spiritualism through the woman as a medium, with Saul. In this case, however, we may infer that the spirit habitually rested quietly in the grave with the dead body, as it is told that Saul said to the woman, "bring me up Samuel," and the woman having done so, said she saw "gods [dæmons or spirits] ascending out of the earth;" and Samuel reproached Saul, saying: "Why hast thou DISQUIETED me to bring me UP?" In a number of places in both the Old and the New Testaments the word angel, and even Lord, is evidently used to mean a dæmon or disembodied spirit.

Taking the Hebrew writings of the Bible in general we find that there is little in them that declares or indicates any well-defined doctrine of a future life of any kind, but there are some very positive statements that "death ends

all." In addition to the above quotations from Job I will make a few from Solomon, who being reputed the wisest man that ever lived, should be the best of authority.

After saying of the sons of men that "they themselves are beasts," Solomon continues (Eccl. iii:19): "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath [or spirit]; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast. . . All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all return to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" This reference to the going up or down of the "spirit" of man and beast plainly shows that this spirit was literally their breath. If not, then Solomon believed that beasts as well as men have spirits!

"It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting; for that is the end of all men," Eccl. vii:2. "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power [to do so] in the day of death." Ch. viii:8. Here again by spirit is meant the breath. "For a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward." ix:4-5. Solomon uses the word spirit in its sense of disposition or temper as well as for breath, as in Prov. xvi:18-19, which says: "Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall. Better it is to be of an humble spirit," etc., but nowhere does he positively use it in the sense in which it is used by spiritists.

David seems to have believed that the "soul" died with the body, or, at least, went into the grave with it. He exclaims: "What man is he that liveth and shall not see

death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?" Psalm lxxxix:48.

But the Old Testament is of and for this world only, and to you who disagrees with me here I say, read it all carefully through with the object of confirming your belief in the existence of a spirit or soul in man that is destined to live as a person after the death of the body, and then tell me if you have not been disappointed and astonished to find so little grain in so large a field!

§ 33.—SPIRITISM OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Many spiritists who are Christians admit that the Hebrew Bible reveals little if anything respecting the questions of the existence of a human soul or spirit having ability to live independently of a material body after the death of the body, but say that Christ "brought life and immortality to light," and that the New Testament writers, under inspiration, recorded and amplified his revelation. And it is true that the Christian's belief in spirit or soul and a future life is derived chiefly from that portion of the Bible; but I do not think the New Testament teaches what I have defined spiritism to be, by direct assertion. It teaches not the doctrine that human souls or spirits are to live eternally in either heaven or hell without a "body" of some kind, but all of its writers, except Paul, teach the doctrine of the resurrection of the old body in which the spirit shall again actively live. Paul, being a man too well educated to accept the crude theory of the resurrection of the same body identically that was laid in the grave, presented a modification of the doctrine as set forth in his theory of a "spiritual body" raised from the dead "natural body" as a wheat stalk comes up from a grain that has been buried in the ground. (1 Cor.



xv:44). See the absurdity of this theory exposed in § 14, to § 18, inclusive, of this discussion.

In 1 John iv:1-3 spirits are spoken of in a manner that leads some spiritists, especially the Spiritualists, to think the writer refers to spirit beings, whereas he speaks of the spirit—the disposition, the temper, the motive, manner—of certain persons who were teaching religious doctrines at that time, some of whom were suspicioned of being unorthodox or heretical. “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” The writer here evidently refers to that vague thing that has been called “the spirit of prophecy.” This is shown by expressions in the second and third verses, and by the general tenor of the chapter.

This use of the word spirit is found also in 1 Tim. iv:1. Here it is said that “the Spirit” (whatever that may be) “speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.” Whether “the Spirit” here means the Holy Ghost, or that spirit of prophecy manifested in the frenzy and delirium of religious excitement, or something else, it certainly does not mean a human personality; neither does the “seducing spirits” spoken of mean spirits of the dead, nor the personality of the living, but living people of a certain disposition or spirit; and even if the seducing spirits and devils were understood to be immaterial beings or personalities, we have no assurance that they were supposed to be survivals from dead human bodies. The succeeding remarks, in verses 2 and 3, plainly show that heretical people in this life were meant.

And yet, the New Testament writers do reflect here

and there the pagan belief of the Egyptians and Romans in dæmons; that is, disembodied spirits. But that belief carried with it the belief that such spirits or dæmons were in a place of waiting—a sort of dormant or semi-sleeping state—awaiting the appointed time when they should re-enter their resurrected bodies, and that belief is not what I defined the word spiritism to mean. This is really the doctrine of the resurrection, which I treated of in the second paper of this series. I find no positive assertion by any New Testament writer that man “has” or is a spirit or soul destined to live forever independently of the body, as believed by Spiritualists, Unitarians, Liberal Christians, deists, and even some atheists.

§ 34.—WORTHLESS AS EVIDENCE.

These references to and quotations of the biblical writings, Old and New, are not made because I think they are authoritative, inspired or reliable as evidence as to the question of embodied or disembodied spirit here or in the hereafter, but because others do think so and rest their belief, in the existence of an immortal personality in the living body that continues conscious existence after bodily death, upon the Bible. To me they are, as evidence either for or against, as the air-castles of oriental dreamers, far-fetched analogies of crude metaphysicians, the imagery of poetry—the “baseless fabric of a dream.” The only evidence of this being true of these biblical references to this question that I deem necessary to mention here is the hazy, contradictory, ambiguous and allegorical character of the writings themselves.

§ 35.—UNIVERSALITY OF THE BELIEF.

Many people are greatly influenced in forming their opinions and adopting their creeds by “they say.” And

of all the foundations upon which to build a consistent, rational and truthful belief "they say" is the most unsubstantial and untrustworthy. No matter how vast a number of people are represented by "they," their testimony is unreliable if not consistent with truth obtained by scientific observation, experimentation and induction. No, it may be laid down as an axiomatic truth that, as a general rule, the greater the number of people who hold to a belief the less trustworthy is their testimony, especially if that belief is of ancient origin. This is because a large majority of mankind always have been and are yet really uncritical observers, illogical reasoners, lovers of mystery, of excessive credulity and suggestibility; and also because largely imitative and exceedingly desirous of securing the approbation of large numbers of their fellow-men. Rather than suffer popular disapproval they will close their eyes to facts they fear might prove the erroneousness of the beliefs they know to be popular.

All the inhabitants of earth once believed it to be flat and stationary, and that the heavens daily passed over it from east to west; and today a large proportion of the human race think they are sure of it. For ages all men believed the sky to be a solid, arched roof of the world and almost within their reach. Millions have believed some people could change themselves into wolves or other animals. Millions have believed that Mohammed was *the* prophet of God and millions still believe it; and their belief in silly stories about him is implicit and as unreasonable as the belief of millions of Christians in the impossible miracles of the Bible record. The logical inference to be drawn from this is that the belief of large numbers in anything is no evidence whatever that it represents truth, but rather the contrary.

I readily admit that a very great number of the race, in the past up to the present, have believed in spirits in and out of material bodies, and even that disembodied spirits will live forever without re-embodiment. But I cannot admit that such belief is or ever has been "universal," or even nearly so.

My contention (supported by facts, I think,) is that the belief of large numbers, or even all men, is no evidence either for or against the spiritistic hypotheses.



## CHAPTER V.

### SPIRITISM AS A WORKING HYPOTHESIS.

#### § 36.—IS THE SPIRITISTIC HYHOTHESIS NECESSARY ?

**I**T IS thought by some people, even some who are of a scientific bent of mind and education, that certain psychological phenomena are inexplicable except upon the hypothesis that there is in man a "spirit," a *deus ex machina*—a of kind uncaused cause which can initiate action ; that is, like Elohim of old, it can create something out of nothing.

The greatest of these phenomena that are supposed to reflexively prove that in man there is a spirit entity that is a sort of finite microcosmic "first cause," analogous to and "made in the image of" that assumed infinite macrocosmic "Great First Cause," is that of freedom of the will. Some, to maintain the proper dignity of man and keep him in his place at the head of the procession of all living things, assume that brutes—"the lower animals" have no spirits, all their activities being effected by the "vital forces" under natural law. But man, the pet and "spoiled child" of the Creator, is an exception—enjoys more or less exemption from control by natural law. He can do things without natural cause—just because he wants to—and can even do things he don't want to do, to demonstrate the independence and freedom of his will ! Like the boy who when asked why he did thus and so, "short-circuits" his answer by replying, "Jist 'cause uh wanted tuh." But others, especially of late, assume that

animals as well as men have souls, and enjoy to some extent freedom of will.

This argument that the existence of a human spirit is proved because it is necessary to account for freedom of will appears to me much like saying that there must be a ladder reaching from the earth to the moon, for in no other way can we account for "the man in the moon!" That is to say, it is not necessary to adopt a hypothesis to account for that which does not exist. Before we try to account for freedom of the will, we should know that freedom of will is a fact. Whatever other evidence there may be of the existence of a human spirit, this appeal to the common illusion of free will is fruitless.

#### § 37.—DETERMINISM.

The subjective feeling of man that he is not wholly subject to the ordinary laws of nature—the invariable relationship of cause to effect—is extremely persistent, and the feeling of self-importance is so intense that we rebel instantly against the accusation that we are not absolutely free and independent egos. But a close, critical and strictly objective view will convince those capable of inductive reasoning that man's will is determined by natural causes, hereditary and environmental.

To illustrate what I mean, I will liken the life of man to a river. We all recognize the similarity, but generally without making any close and critical comparison; we personify the rivulet or the river as a living thing "wending its devious way" from its birth at the mountain spring to its extinction in the ocean's surf and diffusion in the great emblem of eternity, the ocean; we speak of our own life as a stream, and the expression, "river of life," has come down to us with the history of the race from the

“ancient of days.” Though these are poetic similes, they are at bottom scientific analogies.

Yet, in spite of our recognition of this analogy, we do not ascribe freedom of will to the river, but we realize that just three things *determine* its every movement and its course from the spring to the sea. These three things are: 1. Temperature, causing fluidity of the water; 2. Gravity, causing the water to move “down hill;” 3. The River-bed, bottom and shores, causing the water to continue near, without dispersing over, the earth’s surface, and restricting the velocity and course of the water.

In a human life we find just three fundamental factors that *determine* man’s every act and his course from birth to death: 1. The physio-chemical so-called “forces,” causing integration and disintegration—growth and decay of tissues; 2. Heredity, causing the tendency of the progeny to *exactly repeat* the life of the progenitor; 3. Varying Environment—concurrent circumstances of life—modifying the effects of heredity and forming new factors of the inheritance of the progeny, thus almost infinitely multiplying concurring and conflicting elements of heredity as the life of the race extends. Every movement, every pain and every pleasure, every thought, every emotion, every sentiment, every choice, every virtue and every vice, every good deed and every crime—absolutely *all* of life—all of the phenomena of human life are amply provided for without the slightest intervention of a “free will,” and they are scientifically accounted for as effects of those three fundamental causes without recourse to the spiritistic hypothesis. The true scientist never resorts to hypotheses to explain phenomena which are accounted for by ascertained facts and well-established

principles. The objector may say, "I can, by the act of my free will, choose to reject bread and eat arsenic, or I can deliberately place my hand in a fire; though my appetite demand food, I can refrain from eating, etc."!

I reply: You can do these things, certainly, but only as *compelled by your environment* to do so. If you perform these apparently irregular acts merely to convince me that you *can* choose to do so, remember that the circumstances of our difference of opinion and your desire to convince me that I am wrong and you are right constitute the over-balancing elements of your environment which *determines* your will—compels you to thus act oppositely to what you would otherwise have done. As the banks of the river determine the direction of its flow, so the environment of the man determines the direction of his actions—his will.

Two bright boys, John and James, schoolmates and devoted chums, decide to join a polar expedition. They agree to stand by each other in all their dangers and deprivations; would be really and truly brothers. They go, and at length they find themselves prisoners in the ice and starving to death. James dies; John has had nothing to eat for many days. His desire for food is overwhelming; sentiment is dead—he eats the flesh of his once dear friend. Was his will free? The new environment determined his will to do what in his former environment he would not have believed he could by any power be compelled to do; but environment is the lord of the trinity of the "Almighty"—Physio-chemical Action, Heredity and Environment.

It has been objected to determinism that, if true, efforts to reform the criminal by either education or penalty are



useless, as the "fate" of everyone is beyond volitional control; but the exact opposite is true. By changing the environment of the criminal his will may be determined against criminal action and for right action. The "reformer's" will to provide this new environment is not spontaneous or "free," but is itself determined by *his* organization, heredity and environment, so that the criminal and the reformer alike fulfill the great law of nature: Every cause is itself an effect, and every effect a cause.

One curious phase of the belief in freedom of the will is that while we are deluded into a belief in it, in practice we to a great extent ignore it. Every time one asks another, "Why did you do so?" he really asks, "What was the circumstance—the thing in your environment—that determined your will to do so?" That is, he recognizes the fact that the will to do was not spontaneous but caused by something in the circumstances of the one who willed to do. Every detective and every criminal court recognizes the fact that there is a motive for every crime, and when a motive is found it weighs heavily as evidence in the case. We are forced in spite of our creed to acknowledge in practical affairs that the will is determined by natural causes; that it is an effect of cause and not an uncaused cause, and no spirit entity is needed to "create" decisions of the will.

I will here quote what has been said on this question by one of the world's deservedly best-known biologists, Professor Ernst Haeckel, of the University of Jena (Germany). In the 18th Thesis of his address on the Organization of Monism\* (page 8), he says:

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\* *A Universal Monistic Alliance*. By Ernst Haeckel. The famous "Thirty Theses," published by THE REVIEW office, 852 E. Lee st., Los Angeles, Cal. Price 6 cents.

In the same manner as all other functions of the brain—sensation, imagination, reasoning—the will of man is a physiological function of the nervous central organ and determined by the anatomical structure of the same. The special personal qualities of the brain, which are partly given through heredity from ancestors and partly acquired through accommodation [to environment] in individual life, with necessity determine the will. The old dogma of a free will, indeterminism, therefore appears to be absurd and must be replaced by determinism.

Let me give a note of caution: By heredity I do not mean the transmission of traits merely from the parents, but from *all* of one's progenitors back to the first living cell—the earlier influence constantly being modified by that of later environment and the duality of parentage.

§ 38.—IS SPIRIT NECESSARY TO INITIATE MOTION?

Another well-nigh universal illusion is that of the beginning and ending of motion—that a living being can initiate motion—create motion out of inertia, as matter is by some believed to have been created out of nothing by living gods—Elohim of the Hebrews. Even some who are reputed scientists today seem to ascribe this miraculous performance to "spirit," or to "force," which is but a substitute for spirit and just as illusory and unreal. But it is a superficial view of nature that leads one to believe that motion is ever created or ever annihilated.

Up to comparatively recent years men believed that matter could be and had been created, and that it could be and was daily being annihilated. The old notion of the prophesied destruction of the world by fire at "the last day" was, that in being entirely "burned up" it would be completely blotted out of existence—reduced to nothingness. But when alchemy gave place to chemistry the great truth, like a blazing sun just rising, burst upon

the vision of the pioneers of modern science, and one of the most alert of them, Lavoisier, saw it first and announced the great natural law and fundamental principle of science, the Constancy of Matter—its uncreatability and its indestructibility. Then came another student of nature, Robert Mayer, and announced the great law of the Constancy or Conservation of Energy—*its* uncreatability and indestructibility. Then came Haeckel with a still greater generalization and announced the truth that these laws were one and inseparable, and named the one great law the Law of Substance. (See *Riddle of the Universe*.)

Even great intellects seldom grasp a new great truth clearly and wholly at once. The men above named were discoverers, but they never discovered all of truth—not even all of the great truths which they gave to the scientific world. The ghost of the old dualism stood between them and the reality and obscured their vision. They laid the ghost under the name of “spirit,” but reinstated it under the names of “force” and “energy.” They could not rid themselves of the ancient fallacy that there was an immaterial entity “within or back of matter” that caused its motions. Even the great Haeckel, the “first apostle” of what he calls Scientific Monism, is apparently not wholly free from the great dualistic delusion. Note this from his 19th Thesis: “In our modern science, the idea ‘God’ can be determined only so far as we see in ‘God’ *the last* [i. e., ultimate, usually called the “first”] indiscernible *cause* of all things, the ‘unconscious hypothetical ‘*original cause* of substance.’” To my mind, the admission that there is *substance* and an *original cause* of substance, is dualism and not monism. An “original cause” is one which originates, and must have existed prior to that which it originated, and so is distinct from

and independent of it—exactly what dualistic theologists believe. True, Haeckel says his “God” is an “unconscious hypothetical original cause,” but the theological “God” is also hypothetical and may be unconscious for all that anybody *knows* about it (or “him”). In either case the material universe is one thing and an “original cause” of it is another, making two things, which is the essence of dualism. Again: the Professor says in his 20th Thesis, “We consider matter and power (or ‘matter and energy’—body *and* spirit) the inseparable attributes of substance (Spinoza).” In this statement he fairly endorses the essential postulate of spiritism when he gives the terms “body and spirit” as equivalent to the terms matter and energy. The difference between Haeckel’s “spirit” and the spirit of the spiritists is that his is supposed to be impersonal and unconscious, while theirs is supposed to be personal and conscious; both are supposed to be “immortal,” for the law of substance secures eternal existence for Haeckel’s “energy=spirit.” But the good Professor is very near the reality, as appears to me. One more forward step, and he will find real monism.

#### § 39.—THE LAW OF UNITY.

In reality Mayer’s law of the constancy or conservation of energy is but a partial expression of the law of the Constancy of Matter, and the terminology of the formula is defective and misleading, for it implies the existence of an immaterial entity “within and back of matter” as the cause of its movements—the phenomena of nature, when in reality there is no such entity. Nothing is needed as an “original cause” of motion, for motion cannot be originated or initiated any more than can matter. Substitute the word *motion* for “energy” in Mayer’s expression

of the law and we have a true scientific principle, though only one subordinate to the more complete generalization known as the law of Constancy of Matter. It should read, "the Constancy or Conservation of Motion"; or, as I prefer, *The Uncreatability and Indestructibility of Motion*. That is, motion is never initiated or annihilated.

Substitute the word *form* (shape) for "energy," and we have another law subordinate to the law of Constancy of Matter. Form, no more than motion, is ever initiated or annihilated. Forms, like motions, are correlated, and the great Law of Correlation applies to both Motion and Form, but to "spirit" and "force" it cannot apply, because they are "airy nothings."

The Law of Unity is this: Form and Motion are Inseparable Attributes of Matter; there is no matter without form and motion, and no form or motion without matter; hence the law of the Constancy of Matter comprehends the subordinate laws above mentioned. I would substitute for Haeckel's "substance" the word *matter*, because that word applies to matter in motion, which is all the Professor's word "substance" in reality implies, while it seems to imply that something else, "energy," plus matter equals "substance;" and for his "Law of Substance" I would substitute, *The Law of the Uncreatability and Indestructibility of Matter*—which includes motion, for it is a constant attribute of matter—an *essential* of it—"inertia," like "force" and "energy" entities, being an illusion. The "one step more" suggested above is that of affirming matter in motion, not a "force" entity *and* matter, to be the causative basis or "sub-stance" of all the phenomena of nature—chemical, mechanical, physiological, intellectual, emotional and moral—a truly scientific monism, instead of a mere change of terms.

This theory, I believe I was the first person to enunciate, which I did in 1904. So far as I know, no scientist or other person has ever positively denied the existence of force and energy, affirmed the impossibility of either initiating or annihilating, or in way increasing or diminishing the totality of motion in nature, and affirmed that "the cause of motion is not force, but *motion*;" that is, the *modes* of motion by their correlation are sequences of one another. Prof. Gore, of Manchester, Eng., has come nearer to it than any other author that I have read.

If any reader of this can direct me to any published statement of this view which antedates mine of 1904, or even this of September, 1906, I shall be grateful to him if he will kindly do so.

#### § 40.—SPIRITISM AND OCCULTISM.

As a hypothesis upon which to explain the *rationale* of whatever of natural phenomena is mysterious, spiritism originates in the minds of men when they first begin to recognize the relationship of cause and effect, and continues up into the times of the highest intellectual development. Primitive man, of all races and all countries, early noticed that the dry leaves upon the ground were often suddenly lifted and carried along without visible cause; the trees of his native forest were bended this way and that, by a mighty invisible power, and often they were violently torn from the soil, or broken off, and thrown to the ground, as an infuriated man would break down or uproot a sapling no thicker than his thumb—the invisible power had passions like unto his own. The sea would be suddenly aroused from its placidity and rolled in billows toward the beach by an invisible power that he could only in awe call omnipotent. He called this

invisible power "spirit," the wind. Man noticed that by his breath he could move the dust, leaves and other light objects, and even make tiny waves upon the brook from which he drank, just as the wind moved the trees and the great ocean; his breath, too, was "spirit," and we yet call our breathing re-*spir*-ation. His spirit was feeble—the other was the "Great Spirit." "And the Spirit of Elohim moved upon the face of the waters." (Gen. i:2.) Man could send forth his breath—spirit—this way or that as he "willed," and so he inferred that the greater breath came and went by an act of will—"the wind bloweth where it listeth"—a better rendering: "The Spirit goeth where he willeth."

So man, even in this age of science, whenever unable to see a cause for any phenomenon, finds "spirit" a convenient explanation. Whatever is "hidden" as to its origin and mysterious as to its ways, is classed as occult and supposed to be the manifestation of "spirit" of some kind. But gradually from prehistoric times when animism was universal, one by one the phenomena of nature have been discovered to be parts of an invariable succession of sequences and not the spontaneous and sporadic creation of any "spirit" entity "within or back of matter," until only a remnant is now believed by intelligent people to be of "spirit" volitional origin. And a few see a writing on the wall which foretells the time almost at hand when *all* phenomena of nature, including the mental and not excepting the "will" of man, will be *known* to be natural and inevitable sequences of preceding phenomena, and the cause of every effect itself an effect.

Men seem to be intoxicated with a whimsical prejudice against what they unwarrantedly stigmatize as "mere

dead matter." Some even close their eyes and declare that matter does not exist—that "all is spirit!" If they mean by "dead matter" inactive matter, they are mistaken as to the facts, for *all* matter is *incessantly active*. Men speak of matter as gross, as though they had found the ultimate, indivisible particle—the atom—to be as big as a billiard ball. They speak of matter as base and evil, as though the glorious galaxy of the heavens, the smiling flower, the beautiful bird, the wonderful human body, and all else we see are not matter. The truth is, matter holds in its embrace the destiny of all that is or ever will be.



## CHAPTER VI.

### "SCIENTIFIC ARGUMENTS" CRITICISED.

#### § 41.—THE MECHANICAL HYPOTHESIS.

All are but parts of one stupendous Whole,  
Whose body Nature is, and God the Soul.—*Pope.*

A FAVORITE argument of those of a scientific, or rather a philosophical, trend of mind, who believe in the existence of a spirit entity or soul temporarily and unessentially connected with the human body, is this: The material organization of man, with its bony frame-work, jointed levers, tubes, bellows, nerve-wire conductors, grinding mill, double camera with their lenses and iris-shutters and sensitive plates under the brows and their dark room and developing apparatus and chemicals in the skull, etc.—the adaptation of material means to mechanical and chemical ends—is a *machine*; a machine is not self-operative, but requires *force* to initiate and maintain its movements, and *mind* or intelligence to direct its movements so as to accomplish proper results. The human body, therefore as a machine, is incapable of action without the *vital force*, and cannot adapt its action to accomplish useful ends without an intelligent, independent operator, and that operator we call the soul or spirit, which is not dependent upon the machine for its existence, but uses it for economic reasons only.

One defect of this alleged argument is, that it "proves too much" if it proves anything. If we admit its validity we are forced to the conclusion that not only man, but all things have souls—spirit operators, which carries us back

in our philosophy to the animism of our prehistoric forefathers. The body of the dog is such a machine, hence the dog has a soul or spirit; the oyster is such a machine and it, also, has a soul; the busy microbe is a machine, and so has a spirit; and those "simple, jelly-like dots of almost homogeneous plasm—the protozoa," bodies of a single cell each, simple though they be, are machines and so must each have a spirit to operate it. The great oaks and palm-trees are machines, and, as the ancients believed emphatically, there are spirits in trees; and so of all the vegetable world.

We may not stop even here; for the earth, with its wonderful swing in its orbit, ever true to its unbeaten path around the sun which affords the change of seasons, and its equally wonderful daily revolution upon its axis, more exact in its measurement of time than the finest man-made clock; with its rocky skeleton supporting its clayey flesh, its great river-veins and rivulet-capillaries; its rhythmic breathing of air in and out of its great lungs, the vegetable kingdom, its maintenance of environment suited to the necessities of a wonderful world of plant and animal life—the earth is a machine, and it must have a soul, a spirit commensurate with its magnitude, power and accomplishments; and being so great, its spirit must be a god or goddess—being "the mother of all living," its spirit is feminine, and once was called "Eve;" she was apparently of more importance than the sun, moon and stars, and so she has been called Maia, mother of the gods, and Mary "Mother of God."

The solar system is a machine of correlated parts—it must have an operating spirit; even the entire material universe is a machine, and must be operated by an infinite, omnipotent, omniscient spirit, and this is what such phi-

losophers conceive to be "God." Let me quote a declaration of an ultra radical of these philosophers. In Thesis 19 of his *Universal Monistic Alliance*, Prof. Ernst Haeckel says: "In our modern science, the idea 'God' can be determined only so far as we see in 'God' the last indiscernible cause of all things, the unconscious hypothetical 'original cause of substance.'" This is the "Immanent God" of Unitarianism, the God of pantheistic deism less consciousness—a kind of gasiform *invertebrate*, as compared with the theistic God to whom Haeckel applies the epithet "gasiform vertebrate."

Even the hypothetical atom—the individual *par excellence*—must have a spirit to account for its "selective affinity," its chemical likes and dislikes, its "sensibility"—even the great so-called materialistic monist, Prof. Ernst Haeckel, declares: "In conversation with distinguished physicists and chemists I have often found that they will not hear a word about a 'soul' in the atom. In my opinion, however, *this must necessarily be assumed to explain the simplest physical and chemical processes.*" (*Wonders of Life*, page 82, Eng. edition.) This is exactly the spiritistic hypothesis—the basis of spiritism, the essence of dualism, the antithesis of monism.

#### § 42.—MONISTIC VIEW OF THE MECHANICAL THEORY.

This conception of "God" as the soul of the universe and "chemical affinity" as the soul of the atom embraces the subordinate conception that these cosmic and atomic souls are inseparable from and dependent upon matter or "substance," and cannot exist separate and apart from matter as independent entities; and the same philosophy conceives of the existence of a human soul with the same limitations. It follows from this that the existence of

God (the cosmic soul) *before* the creation of the material universe was impossible, and this involves a contradiction of another dictum of this same philosophy, that this "God" is "the *original* cause of substance"—matter plus motion—in reality, matter *in* motion. And it also follows from this conception of a human soul, that this soul is not immortal in the sense of living as a personal independent entity after the death of the body. Regarding Haeckel as the most scientific and greatest living representative and exponent of these doctrines, I will repeat here some of his words most pertinent thereto :

§ 43.—HAECKEL ON THE SOUL AND IMMORTALITY.

From the *Riddle of the Universe*; page 89: "What we call soul is, in my opinion, a natural phenomenon. I therefore consider psychology to be a branch of natural science—a section of physiology." Page 210: "If we take a comprehensive glance at all the modern anthropology, psychology and cosmology, teach with regard to athanasism [doctrine of immortality], we are forced to this definite conclusion: 'The belief in the immortality of the human soul is a dogma which is in hopeless contradiction with the most important truths of modern science.'"

From *A Universal Monistic Alliance*, Thesis 17: "The soul (*psyche*) of man, considered as a separate supernatural being by both mystic metaphysics and theology, due to the astounding progress of modern biology, especially that of comparative research of the brain, has been recognized as the totality of brain functions. The action of the higher soul organ, or thinking organ, being a certain area of the cortex of the cerebrum, with man goes on according to the same laws of psycho-physics as with the other mammals, and especially the anthropoids, next in relationship to man. This activity, of course, becomes

extinct in death, and in our days it appears to be perfectly absurd to expect, nevertheless, a personal immortality of the soul."

Without here controverting the machanical theory, I pass this monistic view as leading inevitably to the conclusion that the human soul cannot and therefore will not survive the death of the body. But there is another view of the mechanical theory that must be reckoned with before we can arrive at a final comprehensive conclusion.

§ 44.—DUALISTIC VIEW OF THE MECHANICAL THEORY.

A large majority of those who believe in the machine theory accept the dualistic view; that is, they believe the material human body to be a machine whose movements and physiological activities are due to "vital force," an inferior sort of mortal spook which is neither chemical nor physical, but a force *sui generis*—not a correlation of exceedingly complex chemical and physical activities in a specific environment, but a unique force which supercedes and displaces the ordinary so-called forces of inorganic or so-called dead matter; and that the soul or spirit is a distinct entity essentially independent of the body, but using it probationally as a convenient means of acquiring knowledge and development fitting it for a higher plane of existence in a life after death without the use or need of such a material machine.

The advocates of this theory often use this supposed analogy to illustrate it: "The body is like unto a steam engine, and the spirit like unto the engineer who directs its operation to accomplish that which is for his own benefit; when the engine wears out or the engineer ceases to use it, he does not die, but continues to exist independently of the machine." And then the advocate, perhaps

unconsciously, adopts the sophism of proving the fact by the assumed analogy, disregarding (often ignorant of) the truth that the fact must be first established and the validity of the analogy rested upon the fact and not the verity of the supposed fact upon the assumed analogy—that analogy itself must rest upon proof, and when so established is unnecessary as *proof* and useful only as illustration—a substitution of the more simple or familiar as an easy means of imparting a clear knowledge of something *known* to be similar but more abstruse or less familiar to the learner.

Another favorite illustration, often, too, mistaken for proof, of some dualistic spiritists, is that of assuming an analogy between a musical instrument and the human body and between the musician who plays upon it and the spirit. I once listened to a lecture by a Los Angeles physician, who passes with some Spiritualists as not only a scientific reasoner but as a “wise” man; he made this analogy serve as his principal argument in support of the theory that the spirit and the body were two distinct entities, and the “spirit is the man” while the body is a mere machine or instrument for the temporary use of the spirit man. The speaker proceeded with perfect confidence, apparently wholly unconscious that anyone could doubt there was any such analogy, and that his entire argument rested upon a mere assumption that itself was as much in need of proof as the proposition he thought to support and even demonstrate by it; and he is not the only reputed “well-posted man” who is blind to the sophistry of this kind of argumentation. It was the basis of all ancient mythology, and is the sandy foundation of many modern theological theories.

The speaker described the supposed analogy and then

announced the fact that though the piano be perfect in every particular it would never produce a single note of sound, much less a systematized complex series of chords, except when manipulated by the human hands, directed by the human spirit. But he did not mention the equally significant fact that the human spirit without material hands and a piano could never produce the same kind of music, nor that the man had a living brain while the piano had not.

The primary problem to be solved before this analogy can be logically and rationally used even as an illustration, is this: Is there really any analogy between the organism of the man and that of the piano—are the materials of their structure, their manner of construction, repair and reproduction, their adaptation to ends, their operating causes or "forces," their methods of action, the same or similar? And is there really any analogy between a man, even if a duad of body and spirit, or a triad of body, soul and spirit, and a human spirit exclusively? And is the spirit of a man related to the action of his body or his brain, the same or similar to the relation of the whole man to the piano?

It will be seen to be evident in these questions that we must know that all these things actually exist before we can compare them with one another; we know the piano and the man as a living being exist—we *cannot* doubt it; but do we *know* that such a thing as an independent spirit exists in man—a sort of "first" or uncaused cause of his bodily or mental activities? If not, the citing of the analogy is illogical, unreasonable and sophistical, and so unjustifiable for *any* purpose; if we *do know* it exists, the analogy is unnecessary to "prove" that it exists. There-

fore, without either admitting or denying the existence of a spirit in the human body, we are logically bound to reject the piano and the machine assumed analogy as proof or in any degree evidence of its existence.

As to the question of a future life, these mechanical theories do not answer it. If we admit the truth of the monistic theory of a dependent immanent spirit or soul, we are forced to deny any after-life without a resurrection of the body upon which it is dependent ; and, if we admit the truth of the dualistic theory, we are justified only in believing in the *possibility*, but not the actuality or even the probability of a future unembodied spirit life, unless we have real evidence of it added to the theory. As to the argument from these analogies, if we admit their validity we are forced logically to the conclusion that they weigh against rather than for the doctrine of immortality; for the engineer and the musician ultimately die, and, if they be real analogues of the spirit, the latter must also ultimately die. We are bound to carry out the analogy to its legitimate end. But I do not admit that this supposed analogy exists, nor that it is any evidence whatever for or against the existence or future life of a spirit.

#### § 45.—THE ARGUMENT BY ANALYSIS.

The object of this discussion, let it be remembered, as I stated at the start, is not to try to prove or disprove that man is destined to a life after the event called death, but to investigate the grounds upon which belief in a future life has been and is now based, leaving each reader to judge for himself as to their efficiency or inefficiency.

One way some spiritists have of “demonstrating” the existence of a soul or spirit entity within the material human body is what I shall call that of analysis and ex-



clusion. This was considered by the above-mentioned doctor to be a stronghold in his lecture. He dissected a man substantially as follows :

" We take off his skin and lay it upon this table. Is that the man ? Of course not. We take off the entire muscular system and lay it upon the table. Is that the man ? O no. So we do with the venous system, the arterial system, the digestive system and the nervous system, and we find that neither of these is the man. The bony skeleton is all that is left, and surely that is not the man—the thinking, free-willing ego. What is it then which wills and thinks ? Let the materialist answer if he can ! " The speaker paused for a reply, and I laconically answered, " The brain." With a haughty snort of affected disgust the doctor cried out: " The *brain* ? *Dead matter think* ? " " No," I replied, " not dead matter, but the living brain." " No," said the speaker, " the brain is only the organ through which spirit manifests mind, thought, will, etc. ; it is the instrument of the spirit." And then proceeded to " prove " it by the use of the analogy of the musician and the piano, discussed above in § 44, third paragraph.

This is another of those sophistical " arguments " that are so convenient for superficial reasoners and so convincing to superficial thinkers. Let us try this method upon a tree, for instance. Remove all the leaves and lay them aside in a heap : are they the tree ? No. Strip off the bark and lay it aside in a pile : is that the tree ? No. So proceed part by part till the tree is separated into piles of leaves, of bark, of boughs, of roots, and the woody trunk only remains, and neither it nor any of the other parts is the tree. Does that prove that the real tree is a spirit

and has eluded our observation in the analysis? A tree is a complex aggregation of correlated parts correlated with a specific complex environment, and so is a man.

No, this argument will not do. It reminds me of the boy who killed and dissected a pig to find its squeal, and failing to find it, concluded that during the operation the squeal had escaped unobserved and was elsewhere.

§ 46.—THE SYNTHETICAL EXPERIMENT.

It is sometimes said that a man must be more than a complex organization of matter under chemical and physical laws, because the chemist and the mechanic cannot build a man, or even a single organic cell, from the "raw materials"—the chemical elements and inorganic compounds, that will manifest the phenomena of life. But this argument also is fallacious. All chemical action is subject to conditions, and all that any chemist can do to effect chemical combination or disintegration, is to supply the conditions under which the desired action invariably takes place. These conditions have to be discovered by observation and experiment. Much progress has been made in the discovery of the conditions under which various chemical changes occur; but the field of possibility is apparently well-nigh infinite, and there are vast regions on the plane of simple chemical action that are yet unexplored, while in the realm of highly complicated actions and reactions the chemical explorer has as yet scarcely set foot. Besides, the human mind itself is subject to conditions with limitations, and it is not only possible but highly probable that there have been and still are conditions upon which many of the phenomena of nature depend that are beyond the reach or capability of man's limited powers of observation and means of experimenta-

tion, so that though the chemist cannot now nor ever can produce all the conditions upon which the transmutation of chemical into physiological activities depend, we are not justified in concluding that nature itself does not, or cannot, produce those conditions just as well as nature produces the conditions upon which simpler chemical actions depend and occur without man's interference.

§ 47.—ANOTHER ANALOGY ARGUMENT.

The spirit and the material body have often been likened to a house and its tenant—"houses of clay" as temporary homes of immaterial human beings, spirits. And this assumed analogy is often accepted as evidence of the existence of an independent spirit entity within the body, a sophism so apparent that it should be instantly recognized by everyone capable of even the simplest reasoning. It is the same fallacy as that of the assumed analogy of the engine and engineer and of the piano and the musician (§44), that of assuming the truth of the thing to be proved and using the assumption as proof—simply a "begging of the question." First, to establish such analogy, the existence of a spirit inhabiting the body as a man inhabits a house must be proved by facts, and then the analogy would not be needed as evidence, and would be useful only as illustration in teaching. Secondly, the analogy, if admitted, falls much short of illustrating the spiritistic theory, to say nothing of proving its correctness. For in the case of the man and the house, they are both material entities plainly observable by our senses, while, on the other hand, the "spirit" in the "house of clay" is not cognizable by any of our senses; the man does not necessarily occupy the same house from his birth to death, or carry it about with him from place to place, as

the supposed spirit is supposed to do ; when his house is destroyed he does not change his plane of being, but goes into another; houses are not "propagated" or built in a way at all similar to the propagation and growth of the body ; and in every point but the single one of living *in* the body, there is absence of similarity.

It is often said that when a man dies his spirit lays off the body as a man lays off a worn-out coat ; but this is only another form of the assumed house analogy, and the foregoing criticism of that fallacy applies to this as well. And there are many other forms of it, of which the same may be said.

The conclusion seems to me to be clear, that whether the spiritistic hypothesis be true or false, these "arguments" from assumed analogies are illogical, unreasonable, sophistical, and worthless for or against it.

## CHAPTER VII.

### NEW THOUGHT THEORIES OF THE SOUL AND A FUTURE LIFE.

§ 48.—WHAT IS “NEW THOUGHT”?

NEW Thought is a name much used of late, but just what the term means (in this special use of it) not even its professed exemplars and propagandists seem to know. It is, apparently, a sort of blanket phrase used to embrace all the odds and ends of metaphysics and bizarre practices—a sort of “*omnium gatherum*” of old and new notions, indistinct and unclassified, with just enough of the results of modern scientific investigation in it to give intellectual flavor, and enough of ancient transcendentalism in it to give a mystic and religious flavor.

Nothing quicker throws a Christian Scientist into a fit of “explaining” than to tell him that “Christian Science is neither Christian nor science.” And this laconism may be slightly varied to apply it to New Thought, by saying that “it is neither new nor thought.” It has been often confessed that “New Thought is, after all, old thought,” and I believe that, for the most part, it is not *thought* at all, but *sentiment*.

Christian Science itself belongs to that chaos of cant and hazy sentimentalism termed New Thought; but it does not announce any theory of a future life that is distinguishable from those of other forms of spiritism, ex-

cept the dogma that "spirit only is real and matter is an error of mortal mind." Of course there is no scientific basis for this dogma to rest upon, even if it is characteristic of "Science." It rests solely upon the authority of Mrs. Eddy. And as for this and a great many other only slightly differing New Thought spiritistic theories and affirmations, I will add nothing to what I have said of "Spiritistic Hypotheses" in preceding sections of this discussion; but there is one hypothesis really though not professedly belonging to the New Thought, which is set forth by its learned and ingenious author as an avowedly scientific hypothesis, which I will now proceed to briefly discuss. I refer to the hypothesis of the late Thomson Jay Hudson, Ph. D., LL. D., that the mind of man is dual: that is, he has two minds, one objective and the mere function of the brain and mortal; the other subjective, a distinct entity and immortal.

§ 49.—DR. HUDSON'S HYPOTHESES.

Dr. Hudson wrote four very important and interesting books, in each of which his hypothesis of the dual mind and that of the subjective mind a distinctive and immortal entity, are the central ideas. They are, *The Law of Psychic Phenomena* (which should be read first), *A Scientific Demonstration of the Future Life*, *The Divine Pedigree of Man*, and *The Law of Mental Medicine*. In order that my readers may know exactly what Dr. Hudson's theories were, I will quote his own lucid language from these works.

Of the Dual Mind: "Man has, or appears to have, two minds, each endowed with separate and distinct attributes and powers; each capable, under certain conditions, of independent action. It should be clearly understood

at the outset that for the purpose of arriving at a correct conclusion it is a matter of indifference whether we consider that man is endowed with two distinct minds, or that his mind possesses certain attributes and powers under some conditions, and certain other attributes and powers under other conditions. It is sufficient to know that everything happens just as though he were endowed with a dual mental organization."

"Under the rules of correct reasoning, therefore, I have a right to assume that MAN HAS TWO MINDS ; and the assumption is so stated in its broadest terms, as the first proposition of my hypothesis. For convenience, I shall designate the one as the *objective* mind, and the other as the *subjective* mind. The second proposition is that the subjective mind is constantly amenable to control by suggestion. The third, or subsidiary, proposition is, that the subjective mind is incapable of inductive reasoning."—*Law of Psychic Phenomena*, pp. 25-6.

"In point of fact, that which, for convenience, I have chosen to designate as the subjective mind, appears to be a separate and distinct entity; and the real distinctive difference between the two minds seems to consist in the fact that the 'objective mind' is merely the function of the physical brain, while the 'subjective mind' is a distinct entity, possessing independent powers and functions, having a mental organization of its own, and being capable of sustaining an existence independently of the body. In other words, it is the soul."—p. 30. . . . . "The two minds being possessed of independent powers and functions, it follows as a necessary corollary that the subjective mind of an individual is as amenable to the control of his own objective mind as to the objective mind of another."—p. 31. . . . . "For our boasted 'god-like reason' is of the earth, earthy. It is the noblest attribute of the finite mind, it is true, but it is essentially finite. It is

the outgrowth of our objective existence. It is our safest guide in the walks of earthly life. It is our faithful monitor and guardian in our daily struggle with our physical environment. It is our most reliable auxiliary in our efforts to penetrate the secrets of Nature, and wrest from her the means of subsistence. But its functions cease with the necessities which called it into existence ; for it will be no longer useful when the physical form has perished, and the veil is lifted which hides from mortal eyes that world where all truth is revealed. Then it is that the soul—the subjective mind—will perform its normal functions, untrammelled by the physical form which imprisons it and binds it to earth, and in its native realm of truth, unimpeded by the laborious processes of finite reasoning, it will imbibe the truth from its Eternal Source.”—pp. 73-4.

The above extracts cover comprehensively the general principles of Dr. Hudson’s ingenious theories. Some subsidiary principles of his hypotheses will be given expression in other sections of this chapter. I will now proceed to examine the chief propositions of these hypotheses singly as to their basis in fact and reason.

### Dr. Hudson’s Hypotheses Critically Examined.

#### § 50.—HAS MAN TWO MINDS ?

At the very foundation of his hypothesis of a future life, which the Doctor assumes in the title of one of his works to be “a scientific demonstration,” is an equivocal statement which much weakens his superstructure, and in discussing his fundamental propositions serially I will number this—

1. Man has or appears to have two minds, the Objective and the Subjective.

In science, that which *is* and that which *appears to be*



cannot thus be grouped together as fact. For instance, in astronomy, where would be our Copernican system if its founder had predicated his basic proposition thus: The earth is, or appears to be, the center of the solar system? But instead he said the earth *appears to be*, but the sun IS the the center of the solar system. The chief difference between science and ordinary thought-to-be knowledge is, that the latter accepts as truth that which *appears to be*, while the former accepts as truth only that which *is*. And all scientists know that mere appearance is extremely likely to be the exact opposite of the truth, so that in undertaking a new investigation they look beyond superficial appearances by the eye of *reason*, expecting to find reality very different from or the reverse of the superficially apparent. So I will say of this first proposition of Dr. Hudson's, that the fact that man appears to have two minds is against rather than in favor of the truth of the dual theory, unsupported by positive facts.

#### § 51.—ANOTHER SANDY FOUNDATION.

Another proposition, placed by the Doctor as a foundation of his "correct reasoning" on this matter, is also very far from sound. It is this:

2. For reasoning purposes, it is a matter of indifference whether we consider there are two distinct minds, or one mind having different attributes and powers under different conditions.

In view of the propositions Dr. Hudson tried to establish chiefly by the assumption that man has two minds, it seems absurd "that for reasoning purposes, it is a matter of indifference" if he really has but one mind!—that for reasoning purposes we have the right to assume the truth of a false premise if it suits our purpose! Science

collects facts and arrives at principles by comparison and generalization; but in this case a principle is first assumed to be true and then certain other things are assumed to be facts because they support the assumed principle—a kind of sophistry aptly called “reasoning in a circle.”

Let it be remembered that the Doctor’s conclusion is, that one mind becomes extinct at the death of the body, and that the other does not, and we see plainly the absurdity of this proposition.

§ 52.—MAN HAS TWO MINDS, IS “ASSUMED.”

3. “Under the rules of correct reasoning,” the Doctor claims the “right to assume that man has two minds.”

If the rules of correct reasoning confer upon Dr. Hudson the “right to assume” that man has two minds, they must also confer on his opponents the “right to assume” that man has but one mind, which “possesses certain attributes and powers under some conditions, and certain other attributes and powers under other conditions,” as “everything happens just as though he were endowed with” one complex “mental organization.”

For the sake of demonstrating what the exercise of this “right to assume” can do to Dr. Hudson’s “scientific demonstration of the future life,” I will accept the one-mind hypothesis for the time being, and follow his reasoning, and even, to some extent, use his words and phrases. “For convenience, I will designate the” mind action of the cerebral portion of the sensory nervous system “as the *objective* mind, and the” mind action of the spinal and ganglionic portions of the nervous system “as the *subjective* mind,” or reflex and hereditary mentation. The objective mind by the reciprocity of its component elements, results in that unitization of mental action we

call *consciousness*, so that we may call objective thought conscious mentation, and subjective mentation we may call subconscious thought. As simple illustrations of the difference between these two kinds of mental action I will cite these cases :

The infant, a few moments after birth will take the nipple into its mouth and immediately perform the act of sucking as perfectly as it can ever do in after life; and it will within a few hours grasp with its hands a slender stick and support its own weight, hanging like a monkey from the limb of a tree. These are reflex acts from inherited, subconscious mentation, the "subjective mind," the "immortal soul," according to Dr. Hudson. An adult will take the infant's finger between his teeth and press upon it gently, but restraining himself from actually biting it; and he will wash the child's body though it screams with terror. These are acts resulting from cerebral mentation, conscious thought, the "objective mind," "a mere function of the brain," says Hudson.

I have said that the subjective mind is of the spinal cord and sympathetic-nervous system, and Dr. Hudson in his work, *A Scientific Demonstration of the Future Life*, devotes much space and strong evidence to prove this proposition, and I accept it as a solid basis of proof that the subjective mind is a subjective, reflex and subconscious action of the same general function of the cerebro-spinal and ganglionic sensory-nervous systems, of which the objective mind is the conscious counterpart, and hence that if the one is destined to extinction at the death of the body, or to a future life, the other is also.

I will continue to follow up the series of propositions embraced in the quotations I have made in § 49, and in commenting on them will continue the assumption that

the mind is not dual, but one general function of a complex nervous system.

§ 53.—“FINITE” MIND CONTROLS THE INFINITE “SOUL!”

4. The subjective mind is constantly amenable to control by suggestion from the objective mind either of the same or another person.

In § 49 I have quoted Hudson as saying that reason, the “noblest attribute of finite mind [the objective mind] is essentially finite;” this being said in “proof” that it is destined to extinction at death, I am justifiable, I think, in inferring that he considers the subjective mind to be “infinite” as an essential condition of its immortality. If this inference is correct, and it be taken in conjunction with this 4th proposition, Dr. Hudson is placed in the absurd position of advocating the truth of the preposterous paradox that the infinite soul of man “is constantly amenable to CONTROL by suggestion from the [finite] objective mind”—the infinite subject to the finite!

§ 54.—THE “INFINITE” HAS LIMITATIONS!

5. “The subjective mind is incapable of inductive reasoning.”

Another absurd paradox into which Dr. Hudson’s hypotheses led him is, that the “infinite” soul has limitations—“is incapable of inductive reasoning.” That is, that that which is limitless has limitations—the infinite is finite; that the finite objective mind of man can reason inductively and so is capable of outdoing the infinite subjective mind of man, his immortal soul!

And he was forced by his hypotheses to another absurd conclusion, viz: “That this apparent limitation of intellectual power is, in reality, a god-like attribute of mind.

God himself cannot reason inductively.”—*Law of Psychic Phenomena*, p. 73; see also *Sci. Dem. of the Future Life*. Infinity is one of the most essential attributes of “God,” according to Christian theology, and Dr. Hudson strongly endorsed Christianity and the teachings and practices of (the supposed) Jesus. Man, then, has been endowed by his Creator with an objective mind, something he himself did not possess, thus contradicting the truism that “nothing can come from nothing,” and the “divine revelation” that “God made man in his own image.” And that finite mind with which the subjective mind of God endowed man is superior to the infinite God himself in that it can reason inductively, while he cannot! Thus we see what absurd conclusions one may be led down to by “assuming” “indifferent” premises, even “under the rules of correct reasoning.” I would suggest that the first rule of correct reasoning demands that the premises be absolutely *true*.

#### § 55.—IS THE SUBJECTIVE MIND A DISTINCT ENTITY?

In order that he should have any ground at all upon which to construct an argument in favor of his theory that the subjective mind of man is his soul and destined to a future life, Dr. Hudson was compelled to assume that—

6. The subjective mind is an entity separate and distinct from the objective mind and the body.

Dr. Hudson expressly states in his several books that the objective mind is the “mere function of the physical brain” and is extinguished with the death of the body. But, if we admit the two minds are not simply two modes of action of one mind, we *must* admit that the two are very closely related to each other—twin sisters, or the bass and the soprano of the song of life, as it were—simi-

lar in essence and action, or it is unscientific and even a violation of common sense to classify them together under the term *mind*.

If one mind is essentially a mere function (action) of organized matter, it would surely be a far call to say another mind was not the "mere function" of another little-differing organization of similar matter, but that it "is an entity separate and distinct from" the other mind or any organization of any kind of matter. A "distinct entity" capable of thought, "perfect memory," etc., as "assumed" by the Doctor, is a *personal being*, in no way to be classed with a "mere function" of any one organ. He admits that this distinct entity "acts through" the organism known as the spinal cord and its nerve-connections with other organs, but does not admit that the subjective mind is the "mere function" of the cord and the nerves, though it is a kind of "mind" and that cord and nerves a kind of brain—in fact a prolongation of the cranial brain. They are not distinct and independent organs but one continuous nervous organization, similar in materials, tissues, and all their physical properties. Why does he make this extremely broad distinction between the "two minds" as to their essential nature, and between the functions of the two chief parts of the general nervous system? Because all, or even any, of the facts of biology—of anatomy, physiology and psychology—lead him by induction to it? Not at all. He assumed that the subjective mind of man is his immortal soul, and from this assumption deductively concluded that it is a "distinct entity" capable of existence independent of the objective mind and the material body. This conclusion was necessary to his theory of a future life, but it is plainly a deduction from false premises, and so is itself false.

I am surprised that such a clear thinker and unusually logical reasoner should fall into this error, and the more so because of his excellent remarks upon the nature and use of the working hypothesis and on induction and deduction, and warning against the danger of falling into error by reasoning from false premises, with which he prefaces his hypotheses as set forth in his works.

§ 56.—EUREKA ! “IT IS THE SOUL”!

7. The subjective mind is capable of sustaining existence independent of the body—“*it is the soul.*”

Let me show you the earthly “home of the soul.” See this snake : dissect it. Open the skull, and you find but a rudiment of a brain—that organ of which the objective mind, “whose noblest attribute is reason,” is “but the mere function”—the finite, mortal mind. See that long back-bone, extending as a series of hollow, jointed sections the entire length of the snake’s body. In that prone tube is housed the spinal cord, the principal organ of the subjective mind—a large and powerful nerve. It is the *home of the soul*, according to Dr. Hudson ! See this man. Behold his capacious skull, a great dome over the temple of human life, the body—the crowning glory of evolution is contained by it—the massive, convoluted cerebrum of a man. But, alas ! it is only the organ of which the objective, reasoning, progressive mind, is the “mere function” ! and when that magnificent organization, the brain of a noble man, dies, the finite mind is extinguished. See that curved, serpent-like column of bones which forms the central support of all the animal organs, but which is crowned by the great dome, the skull, with its wonderful contents. In that more primitive bony tube, lies the

spinal cord, twin brother to that of the snake, and home of the soul on earth ! according to Dr. Hudson.

Does not the very relative positions of these two great nerve-centers appeal to you in the name of consistency and orderly arrangement, of symmetry and order of evolution, appeal to your common sense and sense of "the eternal fitness of things," to reject this theory of a human soul so primitive in the scale of development, so subordinate in its domicile and relationship to the objective mind, "finite and mortal," so unconscious and *subjective*?

#### § 57.—A FATAL ADMISSION.

Dr. Hudson says the objective mind cannot be the soul, which he ingenuously holds by preconception is destined to a future life, because—

8. The objective mind is merely the function of the physical brain, and reason, its "noblest attribute," is of the earth and essentially finite and mortal.

Having commented in the foregoing sections on most of the subject-matter of this 8th proposition of the Doctor's series of hypothetical assumptions, I will here only comment briefly on the assertion that human reason "is of the earth earthy" (*L. of Psy. Ph.* p. 73), and for that reason is not destined to a future life. Hudson says :

"But its [the objective mind's] functions cease with the necessities which called it into existence ; for it will be no longer useful when the physical form has perished, and the veil is lifted which hides from mortal eyes that world where all truth is revealed."—*Ibidem*, p. 73.

That may be poetry—it is certainly not science. How did Dr. Hudson *know* that "the necessities which called it into existence" cease at the death of the body—granting for the time that there is to be a future life ? What



did he know of the conditions behind that mystic "veil which hides from mortal eyes that world"? How did he *know* that "all truth is revealed" in "that world"? He was a non-believer in the ability of "spirits"—disembodied "subjective minds," if you please—to communicate with mortals; he could have no description of the necessities of that country from actual residents of it. Did he know that the soul does not at death fly away to some other planet and there "be born again" into a future life where the "necessities" differ little from those of this life? And how did he know that "the necessities which called" the subjective mind "into existence" do not cease at death of the body, and with them *its* functions? *Know?* I do not think the good Doctor even pretended to *know*: he only "assumed" that conditions were thus and so "over there," because his theory depended upon it. I do not here advocate the theory that the objective mind, or the one complex mind, is the "soul" and destined to an after-death existence, but I conceive that Hudson made here an assertion that, if true, is fatal to his own theory. It is this: If the objective mind perishes with the necessities which called it forth, at the death of the body, we are justified in predicating the same of the subjective mind, as it can be shown by facts that the necessities of the subjective mind are also "of the earth earthy," and that there is no more evidence that those necessities continue over into a future life than there is that those of the objective mind do so.

#### § 58—SUBJECTIVE MIND "OF THE EARTH EARTHY."

To sustain this proposition I will produce the confession and testimony of Thomson Jay Hudson, PH. D., LL. D., himself. I quote from *A Scientific Demonstration of the*

*Future Life*, p. 262 (see also p. 133 of the *L. of Ps. Ph.*):

9. "So far as this life is concerned, the subjective mind has, primarily, but three functions, namely: 1. Self-preservation; 2. Reproduction; 3. Preservation of the offspring. These may be reduced in terms to one, namely: The perpetuation of the race or species."

These functions are those common to animal and man, and even largely to the plant, and pertain to the present life on earth, and so are "of the earth earthy." Hudson emphasizes this confession by adding: "The only *normal* functions performed by the subjective mind during its sojourn in the body, and its connection with it, all pertain to the perpetuation of the species."

Note well that he italicized the word "*normal*." He did so because the functions he ascribes to the subjective mind as pertaining to a future life are such as are manifested in psychic phenomena, as clairvoyance, telepathy, intuition, etc., which he voluntarily acknowledges are *abnormal*! Think of it: The normal functioning of the bodily organs is health, tending to life; their abnormal functioning is disease, tending to death of the organ or the entire body. Is not the normal functioning of the mind mental health—sanity—tending to mental life, and the abnormal functioning of mind mental disease, insanity, tending to mental extinction? Common sense as well as science answers emphatically, Yes.

What a prospect of a future life is this! An eternal existence in a colony of maniacs—a subjective mind wandering hither and thither on the choppy waves of the boundless ocean of eternal subjectivity, a wrecked ship that has lost her compass, her charts and her rudder! For Hudson explains that the subjective mind in this life

manifests the phenomena of insanity when uncontrolled by the objective mind, and warns his readers against indulging in certain practices of psychism which weaken the beneficent guardianship of the objective mind. If its association with and subjection to the control and guidance of the objective mind is necessary to the normal functioning of the "soul" in this life, may that not be one of "the necessities which called the objective mind into existence"? And may that necessity not continue after death if this subjective soul is destined to a future life, and so secure for it, also, a future existence? And, should this faithful monitor of the soul "cease to exist with the death of the body," what assurance have we that we shall not be forever in the sad predicament of the indulgent "psychic" who in this life has thrown overboard the compass, charts and pilot of his subjective mind?

I quote further from the same page, an ominous sentence which the Doctor re-inforces by printing in italics:

*"It [the subjective mind=the soul] can never perform any other function [than that stated above in Proposition 9], or exercise any other of its manifold powers [in this life], except under the most intensely abnormal conditions"?*

If so, what assurance have we that it will not in its future life be just as subject to "the most intensely abnormal conditions"? On page 305, same work, the Doctor says that "any employment which unduly develops the subjective powers in any direction whatever, is attended by abnormal physical and mental conditions." If true, and I think it is, what can we expect to result from an exclusive development of the subjective mind (soul) in the future life but terribly abnormal mental conditions?

To renounce the orthodox future life in hell for Hud-

son's future life of the subjective mind seems to me to be only "jumping from the fire into the frying pan" !

§ 59.—A FINAL POETICAL ASSUMPTION.

On page 74 of *The Law of Psychic Phenomena*, Doctor Hudson closes a chapter of the book by throwing science to the winds, cutting loose from control of his objective reason and allowing his subjective mind to indite a baseless revery as follows :

10. "... Then it is that the soul—the subjective mind—will perform its normal functions, untrammelled by the physical form which imprisons it and binds it to earth, and in its native realm of truth, unimpeded by the laborious processes of finite reasoning, it will imbibe all truth from its Eternal Source."

How did the Doctor find out that the subjective mind's "native realm" was that of truth? If now out of that realm, why?—did it fall from heaven, "like Lucifer, Son of the Morning"? How comes it that this infinite soul can be trammelled, imprisoned and bound to earth by the finite physical form? What is to be gained by a future life in which we shall be "unimpeded by the laborious processes of finite reasoning"? How did he know that we shall "imbibe all truth from its Infinite Source"? Is not this the same old dream of a heaven of indolence and vagrancy—a veritable Nirvana?

## CHAPTER VIII.

### DOES SPIRITUALISM DEMONSTRATE A FUTURE LIFE ?

#### § 60.—ESSENTIAL QUALIFICATIONS OF A CRITIC.

**Q**UESTIONS of scientific and moral importance should never be flippantly discussed, extinguished by ridicule, "settled" by dogmatism, rejected on dicta of incompetent or unqualified opponents, or even criticised by those who have not given them unprejudiced, earnest, conscientious and thorough examination from every possible standpoint. Spiritualism has been both accepted and rejected by thousands of people who were without anything like adequate natural and acquired qualifications for such an investigation. And such people are very often exceedingly zealous and active in, on the one hand, advocating Spiritualism, and on the other, opposing it. The folly and evil of this, in either case, is very evident in view of the fact that some able and learned scientists who have extensively investigated the phenomena have arrived at conclusions both for and against the Spiritualistic theory.

Before I proceed to discuss the Spiritualistic theory, I will briefly state the grounds upon which I myself claim some degree of essential qualification for doing so.

Leaving others entirely to their own inferences as to my natural ability for such work, I will speak only of my

opportunities, experiences and investigations. But the reader is urgently requested to keep clearly in mind that the object of this treatment of the question of a Future Life is not to directly prove or to disprove the truth of the doctrine, but to *critically examine* the grounds upon which it is based; hence the interrogation mark, ?, in my heading, "A Future Life?"—indicating an "open question"—a question science may sometime or never adequately and satisfactorily answer.

§ 61.—SOME "CREDENTIALS" OF THE WRITER.

This is quite personal, but I hope to be candid. Being from childhood a most inquisitive student of nature, and especially of the mind, I early and eagerly grasped everything which seemed to offer me assistance in solving my questions, especially in relation to mind, and I remember of being interested in phrenology when I was not more than six years old—introduced to me by my uncle using my head as a "phrenological bust" in illustrating his fire-side lectures on the subject! This emphasized my taste for the study of mind, and in after years I read extensively the publications of Fowler & Wells, of New York.

I first had my attention drawn to the phenomena of Spiritualism in 1853, when I was but ten years of age; but, of course, made no serious attempt at investigation until several years later. In '60-1 I read one or two books on mesmerism, which interested me much. Soon after, while at home from the war convalescing from some of the dire results of war's strenuosity, in 1863, I obtained *Abercrombie's Intellectual Philosophy*, and studied it as assiduously as a love-sick maiden would devour the "latest" novel. There I found the first discussion of "psychic phenomena" by a man of ability and education that I

ever read, and the impression it made upon me was deep and lasting—even yet I discern it, though half a century has passed since I read the work.

#### § 62.—SOME “PSYCHIC” EXPERIENCES.

Before I had ever heard of “psychic phenomena” some strange experiences came to me, and I will briefly relate three or four of them here because they formed a very important clue to my discovery, several years later, of a rational explanation of certain features of Spiritualistic phenomena. But at the time, I had given Spiritualism no serious attention, and did not attribute what happened to me to the intervention of “spirits.”

I have since read and studied much upon hallucination, but these experiences differ from true hallucination in that they corresponded to, and seem to have been correlated with, reality—fact—, while hallucination is a subjective perception not correlated with a corresponding objective reality. Note this distinction as I relate the following incidents, which, however, cannot be justly explained as “mere co-incidences,” because of their regularity and exceptionless concurrence.

1. When I was about twelve years of age, one summer day I was playing in front of our house very quietly and alone. Suddenly I heard whispered, apparently within my left ear, the name “Andy Buckalew.” I then had an uncle of that name living, as I supposed, about 150 miles away. The whisper did not seem to come from someone at my side—it was so entirely within the ear, and yet it was quite loud and slowly pronounced as one whispers to another some distance away. I was startled, and looked in every direction for the speaker, but at first saw no one. But looking farther away, I saw two men approaching

the house ; one of them proved to be my uncle Andrew, who had come unexpectedly.

2. Not long after this occurrence, another very similar one happened. I was again sitting on the ground quietly playing and alone. In my ear, exactly as before, came a loud, slowly-pronounced whisper of the name of a friend who then lived eight miles away, but had just moved to that place from the neighborhood, 150 miles distant, where I had formerly known both him and Uncle Andrew. He was Richard Moore, and the name I heard was "Rich Moore," a name by which his neighbors always designated him. Startled again by a whisper when no one was near me, I looked up and saw my old friend at the gate, some twenty feet from me, and he also had come unexpected by any of our family.

3. Several years later, when I was about twenty years of age, one morning while at breakfast someone knocked at the door, and at the same instant came to me a whisper so low that I can scarcely decide whether it was such or an exceedingly vivid intruding impression—one not correlated with my train of thought at the time. The name was "Uriah Reed," and when the door was opened a former schoolmate and playfellow of that name came in. He lived about twenty-four miles away, I had not seen or heard from him for some time and his visit was entirely unexpected.

4. Soon after this, I moved to a place about fifty miles farther away from my friend's home, and about a year afterward he came again and called upon me entirely unexpected, and his presence at my door was announced almost exactly as before.

There are three peculiar features of these phenomena: In each case the name *only* was heard or "impressed"



directly upon my mind without sound, objective or subjective ; what was a loud whisper, apparently, when I was a child seemingly degenerated to an "impression" when I had grown up to manhood, and gradually almost, but *not entirely*, ceased to occur as I grew older ; and these whispered or intruded impressions making such announcements never occurred without being succeeded immediately by the objective reality, as in the above incidents.

In speaking of these "whispers," I wish to be understood that though I *seemed* to hear just as I hear real objective whispered words, and could not at the time conceive of their being anything else, I know now, after a great deal of study and investigation of psychological facts and laws, the whispers were *subjective* perceptions by the mind ; that is, perception by the hearing-center of the brain without any sound-medium coming through the special organs of hearing—probably somewhat as a wireless telegraph instrument "catches up" a message without the intervention of a wire ; but I do not consider this analogy more than crudely approximate. The incidents here given do not cover all of my personal experience of "psychic phenomena," but are such as are deemed the more relevant to the subject under discussion.

#### § 63.—STUDIES OF "SPIRITUAL PHENOMENA."

My first direct experience with "spirit manifestations" was about the year 1856 or '57. My brother and two sisters (younger than I) and myself, having heard "table tipping" described, from childish curiosity, tried it ourselves, and succeeded from the first. By first one and then another withdrawing from the table, we discovered that my younger sister, aged about eight or nine, was the most "powerful medium" of the four. The cause of the

phenomena and this difference of mediumistic power were then to me inexplicable, but now the explanations appear very plain and simple to me, on the principle of subconscious mentation and muscular action of the "medium," and the difference in contiguity of conscious and subconscious, or objective and subjective, mentation between one person and another. Later, I shall discuss this basis of explanation more fully.

In this discussion of Spiritualistic phenomena, I propose to almost entirely ignore the doings of professional mediums as irrelevant, for or against the doctrine, as the platform and cabinet performance is always either mere legerdemain or of uncertain character, and shall give attention almost exclusively to such phenomena as occur when a few friends, or the members of a single family, hold private seances for the purpose of sincere experimentation with the object only of learning the truth. I will, then, merely mention that I have seen more or less of the rope-tying feats and alleged "materialization," etc., of the professionals, as early as 1864 and since.

In 1868 my wife and I were one day standing by a table around which a party of neighbors were seated and trying to get a planchette to write. They were not succeeding, and someone suggested that Mrs. Davis try. She did not take a seat in the circle, but, standing behind one of the sitters where she could only reach the instrument conveniently with her left hand, she placed that hand upon it, and in a few moments irregular movements began. After some minutes' trial, the movements becoming less convulsive, writing was produced, but only brief answers to questions and of no importance. That was the beginning of a quite thorough investigation on my part during the succeeding three years, for the most part at home with

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only Mrs. Davis, our infant son and myself in the house. Occasionally others, Spiritualists or inquirers, were present; sometimes the seances were at the homes of neighbors; but there was never anything done in the nature of a public exhibition, and no money was ever accepted.

We had been married nearly four years previously, and I knew my wife would not intentionally deceive me in such a serious matter. She was about twenty-four years of age, in good health, and of a cheerful disposition. In our experiments after the first, no planchette was used. We sat down by our table, laying our hands thereon, and quietly awaited results.

When we went home from the above-mentioned seance, we resolved to experiment on our own account. At the first trial, the "medium's" left hand soon began to move automatically (reflexively, I think.) and convulsively, but soon became more orderly. I then placed a pencil in her left hand and suggested that the planchette was not necessary. After some spasmodic attempts, the hand began to write, but only commonplace remarks. Then I asked, "Who is doing this writing?" "Ida May," was the answer; and from that on, the medium's personality when "under control" was that of Ida May, generally, with many interventions of other personalities, temporarily. The Ida May personality was not a mere claim of that name, but my wife of twenty-four seemed transformed to a miss of twelve or fourteen. Though the left hand for some time did the writing, the "influence" gradually extended to the entire body, when the facial expression would be decidedly changed—the cheeks more rosy, eyes more open, sparkling and "mischievous" (as we say of vivacious children); the laugh decidedly more childish;

the motions were quicker, the voice more child-like, the disposition more whimsical and frivolous. So that the appearance and action was so decidedly different that it seemed impossible for me to realize that "Ida May" was not a personal individual temporarily supplanting the personality of my wife, and it seemed perfectly natural and appropriate that I modify my own manner and language accordingly.

After quite a number of seances in which the writing was done by the left hand, I suggested that it would be better to use the right hand; then, after some spasmodic and awkward attempts, the change was made; the right thereafter was always used by Ida, but also *by all other* personalities who "controlled," though the suggestion that the right hand could be used as well was given only to Ida May. Observing that the facial expression was greatly changed when the medium was "influenced" to write, I later suggested to Ida May that she could speak as well as write. Immediately there were visible spasmodic movements of the throat and mouth, then stammering and words spoken with apparent difficulty. But after a little practice, the personality calling herself Ida May conversed as fluently (and even more vivaciously) as did my wife's normal personality; and she gesticulated, smiled, laughed, and varied the facial expression in ways not characteristic of Mrs. D. in her normal condition, but distinctly so of the Ida May personality. And these personal characteristics of Ida were always as consistent and exceptionless as those of any normal personality, so that I soon became so "well acquainted" with her that I recognized her as soon as she began to speak, without any necessity of her announcing her name; and this personality was so distinctive and persistent that I was compelled

to recognize her as a *person*—a bright, sociable, pleasant little-girl visitor. And for several months she manifested this personality and posed as a “spirit” witness while I asked her hundreds of questions—examined and cross-examined her critically, but always assuming that the Ida May personality was that of a little girl who died some time previously, although this was really an open question with me and the principal one I was trying to solve. This assumption seemed necessary in order to maintain the continuance of the “control.” In our experience we found darkness unnecessary—quietude was favorable.

Many other personalities, each consistent with itself and distinct from the normal Mrs. D. and the other “controls,” appeared from time to time after the first few weeks of experimentation ; but I give particulars of Ida May because that was the first, most persistent, decidedly typical and distinctly individualized ; nevertheless after others began to intrude this personality appeared less and less frequently until it ceased altogether—a very significant fact.

#### § 64.—RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION.

First, I will say that I had always been a believer in the doctrine of immortality in the same sense that most people are ; that is, I had a kind of vague, misty belief, with a great desire to find some evidence beyond the *dicta* of theologians and mystics. Inheriting this belief, like many others, I of course was strongly predisposed to accept the aspects of the phenomena that apparently confirmed, and to reject or consider of doubtful validity those aspects which seemed to weigh against my belief—a disposition natural to everyone, and this fact should be duly considered as influencing my efforts to arrive at logical

conclusions, though I tried to keep prejudice in restraint and judgment unbiased as much as possible.

As to the results of my experiments and observations in investigating the phenomena above described, I will note a few apparently incidental though very suggestive effects. 1. No information that could be otherwise substantiated was ever received from the "spirit" except such as was at the time *or previously* known to the medium, myself or someone else present. 2. When a question was asked that would require an answer that would contradict some previous statement made by the same "control"; or one was asked that the "spirit" should evidently be able to answer but the impersonating personality could not answer, the "influence" ceased and the medium returned to her normal condition. For instance, one personality professed to be the spirit of my uncle J—, who lost his life in the civil war. Q. Where were you when you died? Ans. "In front of Richmond." Q. At what particular place, or in what hospital? A few spasmodic movements and the "spirit" was gone. That answer was just what and all that I knew about where my uncle died. At another time I asked this same "spirit" if he knew where his brother T— was then living. Ans. "In Iowa." Q. At what place—what is his postoffice address? No answer, but confused motions of the pencil and then exit "spirit." I had heard that Uncle T— had moved to Iowa, but knew nothing as to what part of the State. These incidents are typical of many others.

3. It was not necessary that the medium (who was always normally conscious during the manifestation) or myself, or others present, be thinking of a matter, or even to remember it, in order that a correct communication be

received ; it was sufficient that someone present knew the facts or *had known them* at some time, even if unable then to recollect them. This peculiar feature of the phenomena I expect to explain later in this discussion. 4. The answers to questions regarding the "spirit world" were such as closely co-incided either with our beliefs or the theories of it by others which we had read or heard ; no really new information, or any that was not apparently a reflection of this life's conditions, was received about conditions "over there." 5. Notwithstanding the foregoing suspicious concomitants of the manifestations, many who received messages were convinced that they had communicated with the spirits of their dead friends, or at least that the communications were true to facts to them known but to the medium unknown ; and they invariably based their faith in the genuineness of the messages upon the fact that *they knew* them to be true to the reality—which I expect later to show is *one* of the reasons for *not* accepting such communications as tests, and is the basis of a part of the true explanation of the character of all such communications. 6. The aggregate result of all our experience and observation was that both Mrs. Davis and myself gave up the experiments as void of results as to evidence of the existence of "spirits" or of a future life, but for some time afterward considered the phenomena inexplicable. Later, I became able to account for them all upon psychological principles—to my own satisfaction, at least.

One little experience of my own I will add, as it has an important relation to the experimentation above briefly described. It might be objected that such automatic or reflex writing and speaking never occurs, and that Mrs. D. was only pretending to be "influenced." But in addition

to the evidence afforded by the changes in facial expression and action and my wife's testimony (to me not to be called in question), I had the evidence of personal experience. Some eighteen months after these investigations were begun, our little boy died, and being a precocious child and of exceedingly lovable disposition, his death was a loss that seemed to almost wreck my mind or even cause my own death. I thought of him almost incessantly, and often said, "If Charlie still lives, why can he not give some unmistakable token of it?" One night while I was preparing for bed this thought passed through my mind with an overwhelming emotion. Just as I extinguished the light and was in the act of getting into the bed, I felt a spasmodic twitching of the muscles of my throat and mouth, and then several involuntary attempts to speak. Of course I thought it was possibly the spirit of my little boy, and expected his name to be announced. At last just one word was spoken, and that was not Charlie, but "Papa," as he always called me! I was astonished and almost convinced that my dear little boy had actually spoken a greeting word to me through my own mouth.

That was the first and only time I was ever so affected. Almost any Spiritualist would say that it was a convincing "test." There are two important aspects of this experience: 1, It demonstrated to me that involuntary or automatic speech is a fact; 2, the fact that the word spoken was not the one which I consciously thought of and expected, shows that it was an expression of subjective or subconscious mentation.

In my observations of the performances of platform "test" mediumship I will here mention the only incident of any importance wherein I was the recipient of the so-called test, as it will serve as a rather striking illustration



of the principle upon which one of the most "convincing" forms of communication is made by honest mediums and the *rationale* thereof which I shall presently offer.

§ 65.—A REMARKABLE PLATFORM TEST.

In the winter of 1902-3, at one of the meetings of the Los Angeles Liberal Club, a lady medium stood upon the platform and undertook to demonstrate the reality of spirit communications. She seemed to succeed to the satisfaction of some and the bewilderment of others, and to utterly fail with some—as is usual in such cases.

During the performance I sat directly in front of the medium. I was wholly unacquainted with her, never having even seen her before, to the best of my knowledge, and I am confident she knew nothing of my history or of my relatives; and there were none of the audience that knew anything about my deceased relatives, all of whom died many years before in "the East," as we Californians say—that is, in Ohio, Illinois and Michigan. After she had made several attempts in behalf of others, the medium suddenly said to me, "There is something for you, but I cannot see distinctly who it is: give me your hand." And she stepped down from the platform and grasped my hand, held it about a minute, and then stepped back a few feet, put her hand to her forehead for a moment, and said: "There is a lady standing here who says she is your mother. Her name is Jane, and her message to you is, 'God bless you!' She says you have seven near relatives in the spirit world."

This to many would have been a very convincing test. 1, my mother died some years before, a fact which I am quite sure the medium nor no one else present, but myself, knew; 2, my mother's name was Jane; 3, seven near

relatives were dead—mother, father, brother, sister, and three sons—and this was unknown to all present except myself, and, 4, even *I* did not know objectively that there were just seven of them—I did not remember that I had ever counted them, though I knew each was dead. But the emphatic message, “God bless you,” was not at all characteristic of my mother, for she was of a somewhat skeptical and undemonstrative turn of mind, her religion was practical ethics, and I am quite sure that I never heard her make that expression; but of my father it would have been eminently characteristic.

How do I explain this communication of facts only to myself known before, if not upon the Spiritualistic hypothesis, or that of trickery? I do not believe that the spirit of my deceased mother, or of any other dead person, had anything to do with it, nor yet that the medium did anything in the way of trickery or intention to deceive. The “communication” was from my own subconscious mind—mind below the plane of consciousness—through the sub-conscious mentation of the medium, a process of thought-transmission as compared with the ordinary use of spoken or written words heard or seen objectively in some degree analagous to the process of wireless telegraphy and voice-transmission as compared with transmission by the use of a wire and the ordinary telegraph and telephone. That such sub-conscious transmission and apprehension of unspoken thought is possible under certain necessary conditions, and is often actualized, I am led to believe after much study of the subject and experience and experimentation.

I am aware that many materialists, who have not investigated the subject, pooh-pooh this theory, thinking

it to be a mere superstition believed in by over-credulous people only, and mistakenly thinking that it is a spiritistic notion ; but the theory is in no degree dependent on any kind of spiritism, and is as completely physical and materialistic as that of wireless telegraphy, the influence of the sun and moon in causing the tides, the attraction of the magnet or the phenomenon of gravitation. And it is no more mysterious, "occult" or rationally unbelievable than was ocean telegraphy a hundred years ago, or the telephone, wireless telegraph, electric light and power, only half a century ago ; and, I think, it will be as scientifically and practically demonstrable as any of these in the near future. I also know that some Spiritualists use this theory, or rather a similar one, in their attempts to explain the rationale of spirit communication, and to make it appear rational and scientific ; and that this has caused much of the prejudice of materialists and physicists against it. However, two principles of modern science oppose this use of the theory : first, the inadmissible use of a groundless assumption as a premise—the assumption that certain phenomena are caused by disembodied spirits ; second, the inadmissible use of an occult, or unusual, or bizarre explanation of phenomena that may be satisfactorily accounted for when attributed to known adequate causes and explained on simple, accepted principles. It is not the belief in any of the wonderful phenomena of nature that constitutes superstition, but belief in false causes of the phenomena. To believe in the existence of volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, storms, fires, floods, etc., is not superstition, and to attribute them to known natural causes is science and common sense ; but to attribute them to vindictive gods, "an angry God" or

a "mysterious Providence," above or "behind" nature, is gross superstition.

§ 66.—A STUMBLING-BLOCK REMOVED.

It may be asked, "If the alleged communication was from your own unconscious thought [memory], how do you account for the un-characteristic message, 'God bless you'?" In this way : Memory is of two kinds, conscious or active, and unconscious or passive. While one is thinking of something that occurred in the past, the memory of the occurrence is active and conscious; during the time the occurrence is not being thought of, the memory of it is passive and unconscious. That this latter kind of memory exists is proved by the fact that it may be aroused or called into activity and consciousness, an act we call recollection; we often speak of such an act as "recalling the fact." Furthermore, this passive memory may become unconsciously active, as when one for instance, puts a letter in his pocket with the intention of dropping it into a mail box on his way down town, and falling into company of a friend mails the letter while his conscious thought is concentrated upon the subject of conversation, and after the conversation ceases he suddenly recollects that he was to mail a letter and searches his pockets for it in vain, but after a considerable effort he dimly recollects of mailing it. This is an example of the reflex action peculiar to sub-conscious mentation—the "subjective mind," of Dr. Thomson J. Hudson—and shows how it is the basis of automatism. But this sub-conscious activity of memory is far from infallible, and often leads one to do the wrong thing or commit a most ludicrous or disastrous act. For instance, one may speak to someone (say his own child) with whom he is perfectly well acquainted and call him

by the name of another person well-known to him. This liability of the sub-conscious active memory to error and confusion explains the mistake of the medium in saying that my *mother*, instead of my *father*, said "God bless you." He always thus closed his letters to me, during several years' separation, and that fact retained in my unconscious memory was erroneously reproduced objectively by the medium—a quite natural confusion. And the fact that she mentioned this true characteristic of my father is circumstantial evidence that she got it from my sub-conscious memory; and the fact that she attributed the remark to my mother instead of my father is only an incidental result of the above-mentioned liability to error and confusion of the passive memory being called into unconscious activity. The persistence of this unconscious activity of memory to the permanent exclusion of the conscious memory and power of normal recollection is a form of insanity, and hence the fallacy of insane thought. And hence the well-known tendency to insanity of mediums and so-called psychics who over-indulge in the exercise of this substitution of unconscious action for conscious action of memory. Herein lies the danger and evil of such practice.

#### § 67.—AN OBJECTION ANSWERED.

In the above account I said that I did not consciously know that just seven of my near relatives were dead, until the fact was announced by the medium, and this may be urged by some in objection to the theory that the communication was from my own mind and not from a disembodied spirit. Here is the explanation:

The sub-conscious passive memory may retain facts once consciously known but objectively forgotten; that

is, the mind has no associated facts to enable it to re-collect them, for all recollection is effected by means of association—by “chains of associated facts.” So that while I could not then remember that I had ever noticed that I had just seven deceased near relatives, I may really have done so at some time in the past, and this is not only possible, but quite probable. However, this probability is not the only explanation of this seeming incongruity. There is another psychological principle that affords a positive basis of explanation.

The mind is capable of performing not only simple but extremely complicated arithmetical calculations, even with astonishing celerity, sub-consciously. It is upon this psychic law that the so-called mathematical prodigies (as the famous Zerah Colburn, for instance,) are able to perform their wonderful mathematical feats. In such cases the “prodigy” is wholly unable to explain or tell how he performs his solutions, because he is not conscious of any objective calculation, and the solutions of even very intricate problems are practically instantaneous. Objective education does not improve this faculty, but the reverse; and while it is more usual in childhood, it generally disappears more or less as the person grows older. These facts show the subjective nature of the mentation. Such prodigies are simply “psychics;” that is, their minds to an unusual degree work sub-consciously instead of consciously. Having had this “faculty” to some extent in my boyhood years, I am more than ordinarily able to realize the fact of its existence and understand its cause and *modus operandi*. But all I can say as to the *how* of my instantaneous answers to arithmetical questions which it was impossible for me to answer by deliberate calculation, is, that I answered impulsively

—spoke the very first answer that came, flash-like, into my mind. Now, in the above instance I knew that each of the seven relatives were dead, and by a sub-conscious process I unconsciously gave the total as seven.

This sub-conscious mentation is not confined to arithmetical operations; it is plainly apparent in music, art, poetry, real literature, eloquent oratory, true dramatic acting, and all automatism. It is the basis of what has been erroneously called "intuition" and "inspiration," and is characteristic of "genius." Though it is often astonishingly correct, it is far from infallible. It is not a super-human "gift," or even a super-animal acquirement; for it impels and guides birds in their migrations and their nest building, and the bees in their comb building, queen raising and honey storing, etc.

#### § 68.—A CURIOUS SCIENTIFIC DEMONSTRATION.

Argument, definition and explanation are more or less convincing, but most people are "from Missouri" and demand that "you must show *me*" to be convinced. I will now respond to the demand for a demonstration of sub-conscious mentation producing visible mechanical movement subjectively to objective auto-suggestion. You need no medium, or other person present to assist or deceive, nor any complicated or mysterious apparatus. I hope each and every reader will try this simple experiment :

Take a thread about eighteen inches long and tie one end of it to a heavy finger ring, or any other convenient article of similar size and weight; retire to a room or place where you know no other person will intrude; sit down, and hold the free end of the thread between the thumb and forefinger of the right hand and hold the hand above the forehead in such a position as will allow

the ring or weight on the thread to hang level with and about ten inches from your eyes. Sit quietly a moment with the eyes and attention fixed upon the weight, and say, as if speaking to the little pendulum, "Swing to the right and left, swing to the right and left," repeating the command over and over until the pendulum is swinging with long movements and as long as you wish it to continue, holding (as you will suppose) your hand perfectly still. Then change the command to, "Swing to and fro," repeating as before. Then say repeatedly, "Swing around in a circle—around and around," repeating often, as before. The pendulum will swing in each case in obedience to your commands, changing from one to the other without stopping; and you will all the while be unconscious of moving your hand, although that was just what you did to make the pendulum swing!

Notice these features of this experiment: The subjective mentation obeyed the objective commands and made the hand to swing the pendulum though the objective mentation tried to prevent such movements. Apparently the pendulum was moved by the direct command, but it was really indirectly through your sub-conscious mentation and your hand. This experiment ought to convince anyone that a medium may honestly believe that a "spirit" is moving her hand to write when she is really but unconsciously moving it herself; or that a "spirit" is directly tipping a table under her hands when she herself is unconsciously tipping it *with* her hands.

In conclusion, I find that all Spiritualistic phenomena are of "this world" only—"of the earth earthy"—and are not at all a demonstration (or even remotely in evidence) of the existence of spirits or of a future life.



## CHAPTER IX.

### ON THE SO-CALLED PHILOSOPHY OF A FUTURE LIFE.

§ 69.—DEDUCTIVE REASONING AS A MEANS OF PROOF.

**Q**UESTIONS that are not, or apparently cannot be, satisfactorily answered by direct observation and experimentation—that is, by the scientific method—are often supposed to belong to another intellectual plane. Two such planes of mental enlightenment are supposed not only to exist, but to be superior to those of common observation and experience and scientific observation and experimentation and induction. One of these is called the domain of religion—inspiration, or supernatural revelation and faith; the other is that of transcendental so-called philosophy. In both of these domains the conclusion that man continues his personal and conscious life after the death and disintegration of the material body is, in the final step, reached by deduction.

As to the argument of the Christian theologians—the religious evidence—it is based solely on certain declarations found in the collection of somewhat ancient writings called the “Holy Bible.” I have already discussed this phase of my subject to some extent, and will only say of it here that the claim that a knowledge of immortality obtained by or from a supernatural revelation differs from and is superior to, as to method, reasoning, is erroneous. The belief in a future life that is based on the testimony

of biblical writers is the result of deductive reasoning, thus : 1. The biblical declarations are those of an omniscient, infallible being, and are therefore true. 2. One of these declarations is that man is immortal. 3. Therefore man continues to live after the death of his body. This is reasoning, and infallible *if* the premises, 1 and 2, are true. The denial of the truth of the conclusion is not rightly based on its being obtained by other methods than those of reason, but that *the premises*, one or both, *are false*, and therefore the deduction is incorrect.

In this chapter I shall examine some of the "philosophical" arguments in favor of the doctrine of immortality. But, as some readers of my preceding discussions in THE HUMANITARIAN REVIEW persist in thinking that I am trying to prove that there is no future life, I will here again interject a correction: The object of this discussion is *not* to prove the negative proposition that there is no continuation of personality and consciousness after bodily death, or even the affirmative one that "death ends all," but is a critical inquiry as to the validity of the evidence and arguments upon which the past and present belief in the doctrine of post mortem life originated, persists and is promulgated and defended. If the result is a knocking-out of the false props, there are two available horns of the resultant dilemma: The reader can become an unbeliever in the doctrine, or he can become agnostic and try, if so disposed, to discover a rock of science upon which not merely a belief in, but a knowledge of, such a life may be solidly erected. "The truth shall make you free!"

#### § 70.—CONSENSUS OF THE WORLD.

One of the arguments often employed in defense of the doctrine of a future life is that which is called "the con-

sensus of the world's opinion." It is assumed that what "everybody" believes must be true, even if the belief is only a "feeling" that this or that is true without regard to objective facts. As a very good example of this argument I will quote a paragraph from the writings of Dr. Samuel Johnson, as quoted approvingly by the spiritist author, William Howitt, in his "History of the Supernatural," vol. ii., page 132, as follows:

"That the dead are seen no more, I will not undertake to maintain against the concurrent and universal testimony of all ages and of all nations. There is no people, rude or learned, among whom apparitions of the dead are not related and believed. This opinion, which prevails as far as human nature is diffused, could become universal only by its truth; those who never heard of one another would not have agreed in a tale which nothing but the truth could render credible. That it is doubted by single cavilers can very little weaken the general evidence; and some who deny it with their tongues confess it with their fears."

The impotency of this argument may be easily demonstrated. Let us take Dr. Johnson's statement as a general form and apply the "argument" to the support of some old opinions now well known to be false. For instance, suppose that two hundred years ago a writer had said this as proof of witchcraft, substituting only the word *witches* for the words "the dead" and acts of witchcraft for "apparitions of the dead" in the above quotation; or someone in the days of Copernicus had used this argument against him by saying the same thing about the earth being flat, the sun and moon rising and setting, etc. Or suppose a mediæval writer had said this as to the existence of were-wolves, etc.

The truth is, that very often one man is right and the

whole world wrong on a given question. The "concurrent opinion of the world" opposed Copernicus, Galileo, Bruno, Columbus, and many others whom we now know to have been in the right. Opinion, even if universally concurred in, is but a delusion if facts do not underlie it, and the same illusion that establishes a false opinion in the mind of one man is extremely apt to do the same in the minds of many or even all men.

§ 71.—THE DESIRE FOR IMMORTALITY.

It is often said that all men have an inherent desire for a continuation of their life beyond the death of the body, and that the Creator, or even nature, never implants in a being an appetite or desire for anything that does not exist or is impossible of being acquired. But this is another case of a deduction being made from a false premise. It is not a fact that there is an *inherent* or integral desire in man for a life specifically *after* death; the inherent desire is simply for a continuation of life—which leads men and brutes to obey "the first law of nature"—Self-preservation. The projection of this desire into the distant future is an abnormal effect of the inherent antipathy to death carried to excess under the stimulus of the reason in its ability to anticipate death as certain to occur at some time to all. That is, a superinduced desire, just as is that counterpart of it which leads to suicide. The brute and the infant human, not having reason developed sufficiently to enable them to foreknow the certainty of death at some time, and that it will end both their pleasures and their pains, are satisfied with life in the present moment and exceedingly limited future, and hence they desire neither a future life to prolong their enjoyment of living nor death to curtail their sufferings

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ing, then, legitimately pertains to bodily life on earth.

It has also been said that man cannot conceive of that which does not or cannot exist, at least as to its elements, and, as men do have conceptions of spirit, a spirit world, and a spirit life after death, these things must exist in reality. I answer that no man has ever conceived of these spiritual things except as mere variants of the material things of his experience. Spirit originates from air or breath; the spirit world is conceived of as a "world," or a "land," or a "city." The spirit life is but a counterfeit of this life. There are absolutely no specific spirit conceptions and no words in any language relating to spirit things which do not primarily relate to material things.

#### § 72.—NECESSARY TO COMPLETENESS.

Many believers in immortality base their belief largely on the assumption that this life is a sort of probationary one, or a preparatory stage of an endless life, somewhat analogous to the foetal life as leading up to the far more advanced life following birth. They usually base this assumption on the apparent fact that man progresses in this life mentally or "spiritually," but always falls far short of attaining that knowledge and perfection of character necessary to enable him to enjoy unalloyed happiness—which is assumed be the only goal that would justify the creation or evolution of man. These people argue that the wisdom that controls the universe could not fail in conducting any work once begun to completeness, and that the earth life falling far short of completeness is a proof that there will be a continuation after death to afford better conditions for completing the design of infinite wisdom in relation to mankind.

There are some fatal defects in this reasoning, however.

In the first place man does not invariably progress on an upward scale throughout a full-length physical lifetime, mentally no more than physically. The progress of a man from conception to death is not in a straight line upward, but forward in a cycle—on a curved path or orbit from conception up through childhood to the zenith of manhood at middle-age and over and down through proverbial “second childhood” to death and dissolution—a process in no way different in kind from that of a plant in its progress through its lifetime from fecundation of the ovule up through the periods of germination, growth of root and stalk and blossoming to the meridian at seed-perfection, and down through the “sere and yellow leaf” to death and decay, when the entire plant, like the human body, returns to its original state of minerals, water and gases composing portions of the inorganic earth—in both cases in completed cycles literally from “earth to earth” and from “dust to dust.”

Another unwarranted assumption in this “philosophy” is that happiness is the object of human life, whereas it is not an ultimate end, but a means to that end. So far as science has discovered the purposes, objects or ends of actions of living cells, organs, individuals and associations, they are ultimately the maintainance of life by self-preservation, reproduction, maintenance of the young and reciprocal acts for the benefit of the whole, with pain and mental anguish as penal or coercive, and pleasure and happiness as reward or attractive means to guide to those proximate ends and that ultimate end. Mother Nature guides and directs her children, to the end that life on the earth shall persist, with a whip in her left hand and a sugar-plum in her right! And right here is the foundation of all government; unconsciously men have imitated Na-

ture more or less perfectly in the family, the State, and all other associations.

As to man's conscious efforts, they are made under the illusion that pleasure and happiness constitute the ultimate end of all his voluntary acts. He does not eat and drink with the conscious purpose of supplying his body with the elements of its sustenance, but does so to gratify his appetite—to afford himself pleasure ; copulation is not for the conscious purpose of reproduction, but for that of the gratification of the sexual desire—pleasure ; the maintainance of the family is not consciously to the end that human life may persist, but that conjugal love and the love of offspring may be gratified, affording happiness.'

Therefore the assumption that the ultimate end of life is not attained on this side of death is not well-founded, and the conclusion that another life is necessary to completeness and the justification of the infinite wisdom that is supposed to control the progress of life and all other activities of the universe is not logically warranted. Even if true that there is an object of life still beyond the one science now finds to be the final, the facts to prove that truth are not in the theory above discussed.

Furthermore, it is very doubtful if finite wisdom is justifiable in assuming to decide what is or is not consistent with *infinite* wisdom.

#### § 73.—"THE LAW OF COMPENSATION DEMANDS IT."

Much stress is often laid on the proposition that there is a natural law of moral compensation by which exact justice must be sometime and somewhere meted to all men, and that it is plainly evident that this law is not fulfilled in this life, and therefore there must be a future

life where an exact balance of good against evil will be attained—where those who had more than their due of the evils of life will be compensated with abundance of “good things,” and those who enjoyed more than their due of the “good things” of this life will be compelled to suffer by torture their share of evil. This is the basis of the Christian’s notion of heaven and hell, as lucidly illustrated by the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. But many Spiritualists and other non-believers in the biblical gold-paved and walled-in heaven, and hell of literal fire and brimstone, still cling to a mild modification of those barbaric conceptions.

It is argued that infinite justice demands such an opportunity for the fulfillment of the assumed “law of compensation,” and that the moral integrity of the supreme being or power of the universe (whatever that may be conceived to be) could not otherwise exist.

From my point of view, this “philosophy” is sophistical. First, I deny that there is such a natural law of moral compensation, as is demonstrated every day all around us. There is no such thing as morality—justice, mercy, etc.—in nature as considered apart from the relationship between living beings. Nature as ruthlessly tortures the morally innocent babe with disease or accident as she does the “sinner” who is guilty of a lifetime of crime; she brings into being the sensate rabbit, deer and song-bird, and also the merciless wolf, hawk and (in)human “sport” to mangle and torture them. The ancient declaration, confirmed by modern science, that the results of the parents’ sins “are visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation,” itself proves the absence of morality or justice in general nature.

Secondly, no amount of future good things can rectify past evils, or future suffering of one compensate another for his past sufferings. DEATH is the name of the “Great Judge” who balances all accounts.



## § 74.—THE DOCTRINE GOOD—TRUE OR FALSE.

One argument that deserves attention in this discussion is not properly one for the truth of the doctrine, but for its utility, regardless whether it be the true or a false doctrine.

It is claimed, in an apologetic way, that, if there be a future life, a belief in it is an incentive to the believer to so conduct his career throughout his present life that he will be "prepared" when the change comes to enter the new life on a higher plane and so from the first secure more happiness and endure less unhappiness therein,—and even if such places as the literal, "orthodox" heaven and hell do not (or will not) exist: and that this state of preparedness is highly beneficial to him and his neighbor in this life even if his belief is an error and death shall forever end his career. Also that the belief yields much comfort and affords the groundwork of a hope that stimulates him to achieve, and forms a silver lining to every dark cloud of adversity that may overshadow him. That should this hope be delusive and the dead believer never awaken to its realization, nor even to the discovery of his error, he would be none the worse off on account of the belief or the special exertions he had been deluded into making to prepare himself for a future life. Hence if the belief in a future life be or be not based on fact—be the doctrine true or false, its results are good.

This argument carries great weight with many people, even among the intellectual, learned and liberal-minded. Some would say after reading my own above-statement of it that it is conclusive and irrefutable. But let us look closely and critically into the merits of this argument.

There are certain moral maxims representing general

ethical principles which have received almost universal approval, and are recognized as not wholly expedient in all cases. Take this: "Always tell the truth." Almost everybody endorses that as a sound general principle, yet in practice nearly if not quite everybody finds it inexpedient in exceptional cases. For instance, a mother lies in a critical condition of illness; her little child, while crossing a street, is crushed to death by a street car; the physician says to tell the mother the truth *now* would cause her to die instantly from shock. Soon she misses her child, and says to the nurse, "Where is my baby?—bring him to me—it does me so much good to see him at least once a day; it is for *his* sake I wish and hope to get well again." Should the truth be told? An answer of some kind must be given. A falsehood is deliberately invented to suit the conditions. "O," replies the nurse, "we have sent him away to stay with his auntie until you get well; we can't give him proper care while you are sick." So in thousands of cases, yet Always tell the truth is a good general principle. The Golden Rule is also far from exceptionless, yet as a *general* principle, is endorsed almost universally. So with "honesty is the best policy," "thou shalt not kill," etc., they are good *general* but not *universal* principles.

The general principle, then, that truth is more beneficent than falsehood applies here to this question of a future life; for while we may admit that there are certain cases of abnormal intellectual and moral conditions in which the truth as to a future life would not be beneficent, and therefore would be inexpedient, I think it must be admitted that as a *general principle*, applicable under normal conditions of intellectual and moral mentality, it would be not only safe but beneficent.

And there is another aspect of this objection to affirming the truth, if it be the truth, that death ends forever the conscious personality of the individual. It is this: Is it a fact that a belief in a future life, even if false, is an incentive, as a general rule, to right living in this life? Is it not true that a very large portion of the energy and time and money expended in the attempts to "prepare" ourselves, and induce others to do so, is entirely useless as related to achieving the most and best in this life, if there be no other?—not only useless, but detrimental? Granting that the supposed "prepared" believer "is none the worse off after death if death ends his career," is it not true that he *is the worse off before* death on account of misdirected effort—wasted time, energy and money? For example, much time wasted in useless praying, exhorting others to specially prepare for death, in writing, printing and distributing literature in propagation of false doctrines, to induce others to also waste their time and energies in the same way? And is not the daily life of many, if not all, who consider themselves specially prepared for a happy life after death, far from the most beneficent possible for the individual and society in this life?

Much that is thought by believers in Christianity to be essential as preparation for happiness in a future life is, I think, self-evidently absurd as means either to that end or to welfare in this life; such, for instance, as beliefs in metaphysical dogmas, praying, singing and acclaiming words of fulsome flattery to an unknown person supposed to be superhuman and supernatural—even if there be such a being—performance of mystical rites and ceremonies, etc. It appears to me to be more consistent to assume, since we know nothing of the conditions and demands of any possible future state, that that conduct which in this

life most results in beneficence to the individual and the species—humanity—affords the very best preparation for entry upon any other life that may succeed this one.

But, after all—granting that there is some value in the special preparation for future existence when properly and sincerely made—it is at least an open question as to a hazy, indefinite belief in immortality really influencing the sincere conduct of people to any appreciable degree. Note that I say *sincere* conduct ; and by this I mean such as is directed to good ends because it is *right* and not because one hopes to personally avoid the rod and secure a sugar-plum “over there.” Daily observation and newspaper reading, and records of our courts and penal institutions show that the criminal, the vagrant and the sensualist are almost if not quite every one believers in a future life ; that, too, with the special frills of an orthodox heaven and hell attached. On the other hand, those who do not believe in any post mortem reward or punishment or any kind of life after death, but who believe that conduct brings its own rewards and penalties, promptly and invariably under immutable natural laws, are almost without exception people of strong moral character, comparatively blameless in their personal habits and social relations. The names of these people are not to be found in the criminal-court records and prison rosters with those of the eloping pastor and his choir affinity, the proverbial defaulting “sabbath-school teacher” and the “devout Catholic” homicide who goes from the gallows to Paradise on a special permit procured for him by a priest who claims to have a “pull” on the occupant of the judgment seat of the infinite universe !

Is there any reality as a basis for the claim that the belief in an after-life, even if a delusion, is beneficial in the

present life as a stimulant to zealous action for good, or as a comforter in time of trouble—an antidote for pessimism and nourisher of optimism? I answer that, if ever so, it is exceptional. Is it not a fact that such belief is so hazy and dreamy that it is as light as "airy nothingness" so far as impressing our minds is concerned when we have them concentrated upon the common-sense, concrete and practical things and affairs of this life, or when storm-tossed by the waves and winds of adversity and sorrow? As a matter of fact, in my somewhat extensive acquaintance with believers and disbelievers in the doctrine, I find the latter no less zealous, or even self-sacrificing, in good works, and optimistic and cheerful, than the latter; the chief difference being that as the unbeliever takes a calmer and more business-like view of life, he does not give way to fanaticism and waste his thought, labor and means on institutions and missions which give no reasonable promise of affording really beneficent results.

Is it not true that millions of believers in a future life—the great unchurched majority who make no "profession of religion," but who "hold to" the various church creeds as tenaciously as do the others—believe in the future existence, in the conventional walled-in 12x12 heaven and eternal hell of literal fire and brimstone, go right along day by day and year by year throughout their lives devoting their time and energies to this world with no effort to specially prepare for a future life? They carry this belief as they wear their coats, so completely accustomed to it that they are wholly unconscious that it has any weight. Even the most savage barbarians believe in a future life; does their belief in the least moderate their savagery? Of all men, scientists and naturalists are far the least confident of the truth of the doctrine

—almost universally agnostic if not avowed disbelievers in the doctrine ; and of all men they are as a class by far the most upright and least “materialistic” (in the bad sense of that word); no class of men so serenely meet adversity, endure deprivation, intensely rejoice in the contemplation of the this-world life they *know* something about, or more calmly and remorselessly at last,

\* \* \* “when the summons comes to join  
 The innumerable caravan that moves  
 To that mysterious realm where each shall take  
 His chamber in the silent halls of death,  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* approach the grave,  
 Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch  
 About him and lies down to pleasant dreams.”

The reader should carefully note that I am not saying that a *well-founded* belief—such as we call *knowledge*—in a future life, accompanied by some definite knowledge of its conditions and requirements, would not afford the good results, more or less, that are claimed for the present superstitious, vague one. Remember that in this discussion I am endeavoring to show that there is no really scientific basis for the doctrine of, or the belief in, any continuation or resuscitation of the conscious personality after the death and disintegration of the material body, to the end that critical inquiry and research by the modern science method—crucial observation and experimentation and careful logical induction from all the correlated facts possible to be obtained—may intervene and supply a real, demonstrable knowledge of the reality and conditions of a future life, or else such evidence of the nature of conscious personality and the conditions upon which it is de-

pendent as would prove life after death to be impossible. Mere belief is a house built on sand, and the occupant lives in continual doubt and fear that the floods come and destroy it; superstitious faith is a castle in the air, and is the plaything or victim of every wind that blows; but real scientific knowledge is a mansion built on bed-rock, and the floods and winds may come but they cannot prevail against it.

#### § 75—KINDNESS SOMETIMES CAUSES PAIN.

One objection that has been urged against any attempt to remove the false supports of the superstitious belief in a future life is that, if there really be no such life it is cruel and wrong to undeceive people who are happy in that belief while unconscious of its fallacy, because such awakening gives them great mental pain before they become resigned to their fate as foreshadowed in an opposite belief. To this I reply:

In this we should be governed as we usually are in the use of the Golden Rule and other moral maxims in everyday affairs: i. e., supplement them with the Rule of Expediency, as explained above in the fifth paragraph of § 74. I may illustrate my meaning by examples from surgery and dentistry. In certain cases of mangled or diseased limbs the rule with surgeons is to amputate the affected part, and this involves infliction of pain and risk of death from shock or depletion; but in some of these cases the condition of the patient is such that the surgeon refuses to amputate because he foresees that the patient would surely die from shock or loss of blood. In cases of gunshot wounds, attempt to find and remove the bullet is the rule, though a painful operation; but in exceptional cases this is deemed inexpedient. In performing painful

operations the rule is to use an anesthetic, but in certain conditions it is inexpedient to do so. The dentist is in the same way guided by certain *general* rules which are supplemented or supplanted under certain conditions by the rule of expediency.

And so, I believe, under normal mental conditions it is right and proper to propagate the truth, whatever it may be, as to the question of a future life ; but in certain cases of abnormal mentality it may be inexpedient to do so, as at a death-bed, in cases of old age, insanity, imbecility, etc. But this is not the only truth that should be withheld under such conditions. *In general*, "the truth shall make [people] free."



## CHAPTER X.

### THE QUESTION OF FUTURE LIFE FROM THE SCIENTIFIC STANDPOINT.

#### § 76.—INTRODUCTORY—THE STATUS OF SCIENCE.

**I**S SCIENCE competent to give a final and conclusive answer to the question of a future life? Have scientists discovered laws of nature that establish either the certainty or the possibility, on the one hand, or the non-existence or the impossibility, on the the other hand, of a continuance or a revival of the conscious personality after the death and disintegration of the human body? Have they discovered any facts that indicate even the probability or the improbability of a future life?

Theologians often assert that "our boasted science" is at best no more reliable than "faith," because much that was accepted as scientific truth yesterday is rejected by the scientists themselves today, and that probably much that is accepted today will be rejected tomorrow. To this I reply:

There are several factors of what is popularly considered to be science. 1. Certain hypotheses—generalizations accepted tentatively; 2. Certain speculative theories—mixtures of conceptions of what *is* and personal opinion of what *ought to be*; 3. Certain principles or laws of nature which have been obtained by inductive reasoning from all the related facts that observation and experimentation have ever afforded, and which harmon-



ize or correlate so completely as to appear indispensable to the present order of nature. It is the 1st and 2nd phases of science that change from time to time as new facts are discovered ; but strictly speaking these two so-called factors of science are not science at all, but belief—faith—as science is *knowledge* ; so that it is not our science (3) which changes and is unreliable, but our belief—“faith.” Hypotheses and theories, belief and faith, are temporary makeshifts that we adopt in lieu of such science as we are not as yet in possession of.

Two men are traveling upon the plains of Arizona; one, S, an experienced plainsman, the other, B, not so. They are without water and painfully thirsty. Off to the left of their course they see what appears to be a beautiful lake of limpid water ; to the right they see a range of brush-covered hills. B wishes to turn to the left because he *believes* there is a lake of water in that direction ; but S wishes to turn to the right because he *knows* there is a spring of pure water in a canyon of those hills. They argue, and B becomes angry and insists that S may be wrong, but that *he believes* there is water upon the left, and so they part ; S turns to the right, B to the left. At length S reaches the spring in the hills. He slakes his thirst, bathes his tired feet in the little stream from the spring, rests a few hours, fills his canteens with water, and returns to the trail. He sees nothing of B but his tracks in the hot sands. He must try to find B, supply him with water and guide him back to the trail. Many hours he follows B's wavering tracks. He finds B's coat, a little further on, his hat, then his shoes, and at last B's dead body stretched upon the sand, with hands reaching toward the fateful mirage! \* This is no baseless fancy, but an illustration drawn from hundreds of realities.

When we know, we should act accordingly. When we only believe, we should not be satisfied till we *know*. And when we only believe we know, we should continue our inquiry until we *know* that we *know*! That is science.

But as long as we are unable to acquire positive knowledge upon any question we are justifiable in adopting a theory or hypothesis that is to the greatest degree supported by correlated facts, but such acceptance should always be tentative.

In considering the question of a future life, then, we may not only accept real scientific principles as conclusive, but well-supported hypotheses and theories in preference to mere belief based only or chiefly on dogmatic statements of others who have no actual knowledge upon the subject, no matter how great their number, or upon illusory, very limited or superficial observation. But we should never accept such theories or hypotheses as conclusive—only as indicating possibility or probability.

Four branches of natural science are specially related to the question of a future life: physics, chemistry, physiology, psychology; and I will discuss the question from the standpoint of each in this order. But in doing this I shall lay little stress upon the personal opinions, pro or con, of scientists as to the main question, because we all know that even scientists are influenced by their feelings and desires, inherited beliefs, suggestion, and popular opinion, in matters of a supposedly "religious" nature. What, then, is the view from the standpoint of science?

#### Part I.—From the Mechanical Point of View.

##### § 77.—THE ANATOMICAL MECHANISM.

Physically, the human body is a mechanical apparatus composed of a very complex aggregation of correlated,

reciprocating and interdependent mechanical structures called tissues, organs and systems. There are solid levers with hinges and lubricated bearings, various receptacles and tubes or pipes for holding and conveying liquids and semi-solids and gases—air and carbonic acid; and there are springs and connecting-rods, screens, pumps, heating apparatus, cooling devices, conductors (nerves), generators or batteries and dynamos (ganglions, spinal cord, cerebellum and cerebrum) analagous to our electrical apparatuses; there are cameras with lenses, stops, shutters, sensitive films, developers and fixers (memory); there are acoustic devices, valves, chemical apparatuses (glands), cutting tools, grinding mills, etc., etc. When any of these parts of the grand machine are broken, deranged or worn out, they fail in part or wholly to do their proper work and, more or less, derange all the other parts (disease), and when injury is very great or the whole machine becomes worn out it wholly ceases to produce any of the results which it was apparently designedly adapted to produce (dies) and decays.

#### § 78.—WHAT OPERATES THESE MACHINES ?

I have discussed this phase of the subject somewhat in the sixth chapter, and hence I will in this place only briefly supplement that discussion with a short definite statement and an illustration from inanimate nature.

It is said that "a machine cannot operate unless it is supplied with power from an external source and is controlled by an intelligent operator distinct from the machine itself," but this is a narrow view of the subject. We must take a more comprehensive view of nature—include art and artisanship and man himself as parts of nature, his acts all natural, and therefore all of his so-called arti-

ficial productions, including all machines, products of nature. Every movement, every act, of man is a natural sequence of an infinite train of movements or acts extending back in the eternal past, under the law of the correlation of modes of motion. So a man-made machine is not a product of mind as an "uncaused cause," but of a chain of causes and effects inevitably and necessarily leading up to—determining—both its invention and construction, and then its operation.

In this broad view we see that any tool or machine is but an addition to man's organism, an evolution of a supplementary part, organ or system. A pick and shovel are but an evolution of the finger-nail and hand ; a knife, of the incisor teeth, a flouring mill, of the molars ; a microscope or a telescope, but a supplementary organ of sight, the telephone, an evolution of the organ of hearing, etc. But, says the objector, these tools and machines are products of man's free will and intelligence, while his bodily organs are involuntary productions of the vital principle. But this is another narrow view. Granting, for the present, that there is such a thing as "the vital principle," in a broader view we see that the machine is equally a production of "the vital principle," for it first produced the brain and hand that produced the machine. We do not say that the square, saw and hammer builds a house ; we go back of them one step, but the physicist stops not at one step—nor two, nor a million ; his broad view shows the house to be the production of an infinite series of antecedent causes. So the "man-made machine" is only man-made in a narrow sense, and the so-called vital principle is itself only a proximate cause, an effect of antecedent causes.

Do you say that a machine cannot be devised and con-

structed without the intervention of a "free will and intelligence?" But can this boasted "free will and intelligence" devise, adapt means to ends and construct a brain that can perform purposive acts? Why, skilled biologists have so far failed to produce, by their "free will and intelligence," even a single organic cell or a pinch of protoplasm, much less a brain-machine capable of producing the phenomena of "free will and intelligence!" No, apparent free will, intelligence and the human hand are Nature's means to an end—her square, saw and hammer!

§ 79.—ILLUSTRATIONS FROM INANIMATE NATURE.

If we admit that a personal, conscious intelligence is necessary to operate the machine called the human brain, we must admit the same for the heart, stomach, liver and other machines of the system, for they all do purposeful work; and also of all plants and plant organs. Yes, and in the inorganic world systematic work is done by nature's machines. What is the earth-globe daily revolving upon its axis to produce day and night, and annually sweeping around the sun with its axis inclined to the plane of its orbit to produce the seasons, but a great machine? Does a spirit operate it? and when the earth ceases to revolve, like the moon, and is cold in death or returned to the disintegrated nebular condition, will that "disembodied spirit" continue in "a future life?"

Another example from inanimate nature: The heat of the sun evaporates the water of the ocean, which is then absorbed by the atmosphere above it; the globular form of the earth and the variations of temperature with the change of the seasons, caused by the inclination of the earth's axis to the plane of its orbit while encircling the sun, produces such extensive movements of the air as to

carry the vapor over the land where contact with cold currents condenses it and then it falls as rain to the ground, for the "purpose" of irrigating vegetation; channels are provided, having a downward slope to the ocean, so that the water may be returned to again be evaporated. This is a grand irrigating plant—means wonderfully adapted to ends, apparently purposively—ingenious, complicated machine in constant operation! Does an intelligent personality operate it? and when this material machine is worn out, or dies, will its spirit graduate into a "higher future life"? If so, the pagan's rain-god is no myth!

But what has all this to do with the question of a future life of man? Let us see.

#### § 80.—THE CONCLUSION FROM FACTS OF PHYSICS.

If the human body is a machine, or a system of correlated machines, as believers in a future life affirm and non-believers generally do not deny, from the facts that such machine operates because of the laws of the persistence—indestructibility and uncreatability—of motion and the correlation and transmutability of the modes of motion, as a link in an infinite chain—series—of causes and effects, not from any uncaused cause—force, mind, spirit or soul entity—within, behind or over it, it follows that there is absolutely nothing of this machine except matter in motion in the modes we call life and mind, and that when this machine dies its peculiar modes of motion are transmuted into other modes, and so as vital and mental modes wholly cease.

From the standpoint of physics, therefore, we can see no evidence that the phenomena of the human brain, or, strictly speaking, human organism (brain and body being interdependent), which we call the mind and the per-

sonality, continue after the disintegration of the body. At the present stage of this branch of science, there are no known facts or principles that indicate that such a future life is probable or even possible ; but physics, like other natural sciences, is in a state of active evolution, and it would be only presumption to say that facts and principles of physics may not yet be discovered that would reverse this view, and equally presumptuous to assume that such will be the case. We must accept it at present in its present status, not as we imagine it may be in the future.

#### Part II.—From the Chemical Point of View.

After discussing so fully the relations of physics to the question of a post mortem life, I need but remark briefly on the chemical aspect, the two sciences being so closely related to each other.

##### § 81.—CHEMICAL CONSTITUENCY.

All bodies in nature, organic or inorganic, living or non-living, of which our senses take cognizance, upon careful analysis are found to be constituted of one or more substances which are considered to be "simple elements" because chemists, in a vast amount of experimentation and critical observation, have never been able to analyze them—separate them into even two components—nor observe their formation by a union of other substances. Of such are oxygen, hydrogen, carbon, calcium, silver, gold, etc. Compound bodies are composed of these "elements" combined in one of three ways: mechanical mixture, as the air; chemical combination, as water; and organic growth, as living tissues of plants and animals. There is, however, no definite line of distinction between one of these ways and another, just as the line between plant and animal life is indefinite. Though generally



the three methods are plainly distinct, in some cases they seem to merge by imperceptible gradation.

#### § 82.—THE LAW OF CHANGE.

One great, universal fact relating to the constituency of material bodies (inorganic as well as organic) is, that *they are all unstable*—subject to disintegration; and another great universal fact is, that, after disintegration of any body of matter, the separated particles or elements *re-integrate to constitute other bodies*, more or less enduring but also unstable. This disintegration and re-integration is action under the great Law of Change, and on this depends the phenomena of the universe, from the rotation and revolution of the heavenly bodies to the transmutation of forms of bodies and modes of motion. By this great law of change suns and planetary systems are constructed from nebulous matter—disintegrated matter of preceding suns and planetary systems—and by it they are disintegrated into nebulous matter, crude material for the building of succeeding suns and systems—"world without end!" As well, by this law of nature inorganic matter yields its non-living forms and becomes organic, living plants, and these yield up their elements for use in building living animal tissues; and by it the animal tissues, including those of man, are disintegrated to form inorganic food for plants, and so round and round goes on the birth, life, death, disintegration and resurrection of *matter* here on earth, and every day is a "day of judgment—i. e., a day of readjustment.

No, our bodies do not only become food for grass when we breathe out the last breath, but literally "in the midst of life we are in death," for with the first expiration of the new-born infant goes out of its body a quantity of

carbon that a moment before was an indispensable constituent of its living body; and that carbon has not only been disintegrated from tissue or cell combination, but it has been re-integrated by a chemical compact with oxygen and formed carbonic acid, a gas which mingles with the air; away it floats, like a "departed spirit," which it truly and literally is, until it comes in contact with a blade of grass or leaf of a tree, when it is disintegrated and the carbon is made a constituent of plant tissue, which later is eaten by beast or man—literally re-incarnated! Taking the great, pre-eminently basic chemical element of *all* living beings, CARBON, as the "soul," we have a real, scientific "re-incarnation," "transmigration of the soul," "regeneration" or "new birth," "resurrection," etc. May it not be that these theological mysteries are, after all, vague and dreamy subjective recognition of the great facts of nature now being objectified by inductive science? As in literature—poetry and fiction—and in art, there is always necessarily a basis of elemental facts, so in metaphysical and theological systems there must necessarily be basic facts even though but dimly perceived, for man is not a creator—he cannot "make something out of nothing"—not even a fallacious theory or a false doctrine.

Briefly, it is a well-established fact that all chemically complex bodies, of two or more elements, are unstable and under varying environment disintegrate and enter into new combinations, forming new bodies of matter; and as a general principle, the more complex the aggregation the more unstable it is, and organic compounds being exceedingly complex are very unstable; and hence the very life activity itself is but an incessant and rapid chemical decomposition and recomposition of tissue. The human body, then, as an individuality, during life is really a

lightning-like succession of individualities, just as the human species as a whole during its entire race existence is a slower succession of these complex individualities, of an average duration, say, of thirty years.

The sum of the activities of the grand man, humanity, correspond exactly to the chemical and physical motions inherent in and inseparable from its constituents—persons—and the sum of the activities of each of these race-constituents (persons) corresponds exactly to the inherent chemical and physical motions or activities of its organs, cells, corpuscles, molecules and atoms; and the sum of the activities of the grand man—the race—is no less and no more a “soul” capable of separation from and existence independent of its chemical constituents than is that of the individual or person. Indeed, there is today in London, Eng., a sect called the “Church of Humanity” which holds as a creedal doctrine that the race has a soul, and its members pray to that race soul as a superior personal being—“the true and living God”!

#### § 83.—MAN CHIEFLY WATER.

The human body, apparently so solid, is chiefly water, consisting of about 7 pounds of water to every 3 pounds of solid material; that is, about 70 per cent water. At the same temperature that water is a liquid, its components, oxygen and hydrogen, when not chemically united are both gases; so that were the water in a man's body to be suddenly disintegrated, he would immediately become 70 per cent gas. And I am here tempted to say, by way of diversion, that, apparently, this most dire calamity often occurs!—politicians and preachers being especially predisposed to the disease!

Water is the only inorganic substance which animals, including man, directly assimilate; all other elements of

nutrition—substances that enter into the construction of the living tissues—must first be raised by plant life from the domain of inorganic matter up into the domain of organic matter. Air is no exception to this, for it or its components, oxygen and nitrogen, do not become any part of living tissue; we breathe in order that the oxygen of the air may chemically unite with the carbon in the venous blood that it may be, in the gaseous state (as carbonic acid gas), readily eliminated from the living system. The “spirit” (etymologically, the breath,) of man, which it is said “God breathed into his nostrils” to make him “a living soul,” and which “ghost” man “gives up” forty times every minute while he lives, is, then, only a vehicle of physiological sewage.

#### § 84.—CHEMISTRY OF THE PLASMA.

The essential substance of all living things, vegetable and animal, called the *plasma* is constituted of chemical elements, but combined in proportions never found in inorganic nature, and, so far, beyond the skill of chemists to effect experimentally. This plasma varies somewhat under different conditions, but in general the plasmic substances consist of what are called “the five organo-genetic elements,” combined in about these proportions by weight: Carbon, 51 to 54 per cent; Oxygen, 21 to 23 per cent; Nitrogen, 15 to 17 per cent; Hydrogen, 6 to 7 per cent; Sulphur, 1 to 2 per cent.

These elementals uncombined are, solids, two—C. and S.; gases, three—O., N. and H.; no liquids. Yet the product of the combining process, plasma, is neither a solid nor a gas, but a semi-liquid or jelly-like substance, of which the white of an egg is a good example. This change of state resulting from the combination, points

directly to the fact that plasma is not a mere mechanical mixture of the five elements, but a product of chemical combination. That it is not a product of a "vital force" *sui generis*, but chemic, is shown by the fact that this change of state as a result of union is a phenomenon common in inorganic combinations, as is illustrated by the chemical combination of the two gases, oxygen and hydrogen, resulting in the formation of the liquid, water.

Other chemical elements than the five organogenetic elements of plasma enter into the formation of living tissues, as calcium, phosphorus, etc., but they may be considered as auxiliaries of the plasmic substance, important but not essential to life action.

#### § 85.—THE VERDICT OF CHEMISTRY.

Do the facts and principles of chemistry above considered, or any others known to chemists, prove that there is any "spirit" or "soul" entity or personality connected in any way, either as cause or modifying influence affecting the chemical actions or reactions, with the material structure of plant, brute or human? No. All the structural changes within living organisms are accounted for upon the general principles of chemical action in the domain of inorganic matter, modified only by the peculiar conditions essential to the manifestation of life. Does organic chemistry confirm the theory that "nothing is ever destroyed, therefore man must be immortal"? Not at all; but on the contrary chemistry proves that no body of matter constituted of two or more indivisible atoms is stable, but finite in duration under the law of change.

To illustrate: I am now before a case of type; let each letter represent an atom of a chemical element. I pick up one and then another and unite them so as to spell the

words on this page ; among them is, say, the word god, but after printing the page I disintegrate the word by distributing the type back into the case. The word god as a combination of type-letters has been destroyed. I then set another page from the same case of type, and in doing so I pick up identically the same types I had used in the word god, but arrange them differently and so as to spell dog ; again I use the same types but add another o and produce the word good. So things as we know them in composite bodies of matter, inorganic or organic, are not only destructible, but of necessity they *must* be destroyed that others may be formed from their elements. Let this destruction in nature cease, and the universe would stand still—be an infinite petrification.

Yes, we die, as chemistry demonstrates, not that *we* may live again, but that *others* may live.

Does chemical science afford any facts or principles in support of the doctrine of a future life, either by resurrection of the body or the disembodiment of an immortal spirit, or by re-embodiment of a disembodied soul ? Not one. Chemistry takes absolutely no cognizance of anything that even suggests the indestructibility of anything but the elementary atom, or the probability or possibility of a future life after final death of the body.

### Part III.—From the Physiological Point of View.

That branch of biological science which relates to the actions peculiar to the various anatomical organs, tissues and cells of living plants and animals, physiology, may at first sight appear irrelevant to the question of a post mortem life, but I think it can be shown to embrace very important facts and principles bearing strongly upon the subject. Let us see.

## § 86.—NATURE OF PHYSIOLOGICAL FUNCTION.

Each organ, tissue and cell of a living being is evidently adapted, more or less perfectly, to the performance of work for the well-being and perpetuation of itself, the individual (as a co-operative community), and the race or species (a more comprehensive co-operative community whose units are the aforesaid minor communities, the individuals). No matter how much we differ as to what is the cause of this adaptation, or as to its being the result of intelligent design, it exists apparently as purposive effort. Take, for instance, the leaves on a tree: together with one another and the trunk, branches, roots, etc., they constitute a co-operative community, and the interdependence of the leaf, trunk and root is so great that no one of these members can long continue to live without the co-operative work of all the others. The leaf is so constructed that it is adapted to its atmospheric environment, the light of the sun, constituents, contents and movement of the air, apparently, at least, by intelligent, purposive design, so that it "works" not only to build and maintain its own individuality but also that of the entire tree. In fact a real altruism seems to exist, for the root seems to work chiefly in collecting materials from the soil for use in constructing the trunk and the leaves; the leaves seem chiefly concerned in extracting carbon from the air for the building of the trunk and the roots, and the chief uses of the trunk seems to be to support the leaves high in the air and sunlight and connect the leaf and the root with each other to make their co-operation possible and eminently practicable. Then there is the flower and the seed: the leaf, root and trunk unite in the work, apparently as the chief purpose of their ex-

istence, to produce flowers and seeds; the flower is devoted almost entirely to the perfecting of the seed, and this reciprocates by devoting its work to the starting of a new community-individual tree in order that the community-species may continue and increase.

And so with all living things throughout nature.

#### § 87.—PHYSIOLOGICAL AUTOMATISM.

The popular belief that matter is "dead," inert, except when impelled to move or act by an invisible, mysterious "force" entity or "spirit" entity within, "behind" or "back of" it, is a fallacy arising from a misconception of the nature of cause and of motion. The true conception is that matter is *never* inert, and is *always* in motion; that motion cannot be destroyed, suspended or "diffused in vacant space"; and motion cannot be initiated or created. What appears to be a cessation of motion or the beginning of motion is only the cessation or the beginning of a *mode* at the time of a transmutation from one mode into another. Hence physiological action is not caused by any "vital force" entity, but is a mode of motion resulting from a transmutation of the physical and chemical modes in which the living matter moved before it became living matter, while as yet inorganic. This transmutation occurs because of changed conditions, just as a man apparently voluntarily changes his modes (methods) of activity under different conditions—"suits his action to the circumstances," as he says.

Living cells, tissues and organs (including the human brain), therefore, perform their functions as they do simply because the matter of which they are composed *cannot cease* to act and so changes its *modes* of action into physiological functioning in conformity with the conditions



and its adaptation to them. No mysterious invisible being or vital force is needed to "cause" them to act, or to be hypothecated to account for the performance of their proper functions.

§ 88.—THE PHYSIOLOGICAL ULTIMATE.

A physiological function, then, of any organ, tissue or cell, is that special work it is adapted to do, and does perform by virtue of its particular organization and influence of heredity and environment; and it may be stated concisely, as a logical generalization of the known facts of comparative physiology, as a biological principle or natural law of life, that *the object of all functional activity is the construction and preservation*, first, of the acting organ, tissue or cell; second, of the individual of which it is an anatomical member; and third, of the species—in procreation and care of offspring. And another generalization of much significance in connection with this is thus formulated by Professor Ernst Haeckel in his Fifteenth Thesis: "All vital activities—inclusive of the psychical or 'soul' functions—take place according to the laws of physics and chemistry," as I have stated in § 85. And a third great physiological generalization equally well founded on the known facts, is this: All functional activity—including the consciousness of pain and pleasure, suffering of sorrow and enjoyment of happiness, and the horror of death and desire to live, and even *the hope of a continued existence after death*—is adapted to and normally results in the production and preservation of life here on earth as we objectively know it, so that we are justifiable in concluding that the ultimate end of all life activity—physiological function—including thought, is bodily life: a progression by revolutions, as in all other

departments of nature.

§ 89.—DOES THE BRAIN THINK ?

It has been said that the brain does not and cannot of itself think ; “the mind or spirit uses the brain as a medium for the manifestation of its thought ; it is preposterous to say that mere matter can think ; the brain is merely a convenient but not indispensable tool of mind or spirit.” So say the believers in human dualism. Let us step by step through comparison approach the question, Is thinking a physiological function of the cerebral brain—thought a result of brain functioning?

The result of muscular contraction is bodily movement ; the result of salivary and gastric secretion is digestion of food ; the result of the alternate expansion and contraction of the chest is respiration, and of that, decarbonization of the blood ; the result of the glandular action of the liver is the removal of deleterious waste matter from the blood and making of it a useful intestinal lubricant ; the result of the muscular action of the heart and arteries is the circulation of the blood ; the result of the contraction and expansion of the pores of the skin by variations of temperature is the maintainance of an even and proper warmth of the body ; the result of the action of the iris of the eye, by which the pupil is expanded and contracted, is the regulation to some extent of the amount of light that enters the eye ; the result of the action of the sensory nerves is the merging of sensory impressions in centers of perception to form the basis of consciousness ; the result of the actions of the spinal cord, medulla and cerebellum, is the regulation and unification of the various physiological activities of the entire system. And the physiologist conceives of all these results being brought

about by the action *of the organs* named, not by the action of invisible, mysterious, immaterial beings *through* them as negative mediums or *by* them as instruments.

But let us take one more step: the result of the action of the cerebrum is—what? Does Nature here reverse herself, and after constructing a system of co-operating, automatic organs, build one more of far greater excellence, placed like an autocrat on a throne over them, and debase it to the position of a mere “convenient” but “not indispensable” tool of a being hidden, like the manipulator of Punch and Judy, “behind” it? Or is Nature consistent, so that, as with the other organs, we may say that the cerebral brain itself acts automatically to bring about a result for the well-being of itself and all the other co-operating members of the community constituting the individual, and so also of society and the species? Then, shall I continue the list in normal order and say: the result of the action (thinking) of the cerebrum is *thought*? That it is a very complex organ, and receives impressions through the organs of sense which it combines and transmutes into not only intellectual thought, but also sentiment and emotion? And these—are they “things,” or are they not really modes of motion, as are sound, heat, light, electricity and magnetism? If so, they are effects of complex causes liable to, and by the natural laws of correlation and change surely destined to, dissolution? And with destruction of the cause, the effect ceases to be produced. No cerebral brain, no functions of emotion, sentiment or thought. Just as, no eyes, no seeing; no feet, no walking; no wings, no flying; no glands, no secretions; no sensory nerves, no feeling; no sensory unifying center, no consciousness—are all physiological truisms, so, to the unprejudiced mind, no cerebrum, no

thought, emotion or sentiment, is also a physiological truism; and without these, there is no personality.

It has been said by way objection to the physiological principle that the several anatomical members each acts automatically in and of itself, by virtue of the potency of the molecular and other motions of its constituents modified by their peculiar relations to one another in the organism and to their external environment, that the evident purposive adaptation of means to ends in the structure and functions of these parts necessarily implies the existence of an intelligent designer of them.

Though this is a mooted question, I will here assume that such a designing intelligence does exist; but I reply that such intelligence must of necessity itself be a complex organization of the primary elements of intelligence because the relative position in the scale is based on the principle that the "higher" the living being the more complex and intricate its constituency and *vice versa*, and as the creator must be superior to (higher than) its creation, this designer must be even more complex than the material organism, and therefore destined by the laws of correlation and change to dissolution—death.

All of the known physiological facts support the generalization that all of the phenomena of life, from those of a single cell to those of the human cerebrum, are determined by the adaptation of structure to its environment, and that when that adaptation cannot be maintained, the phenomena all end—which is final death.

If the destruction of the cerebral brain is inevitably followed by annihilation of the consciousness and the personality, as physiological science certainly teaches us, a post mortem future life would be impossible.

## Part IV.—From the Psychological Point of View.

## § 90.—WHAT IS PSYCHOLOGY?

**P**SYCHOLOGY defined etymologically : a discourse upon the butterfly !—from the Greek *logos*, word or discourse, and *psyche*, a butterfly. Herein is disclosed the Greek (and incidentally the New Testament) conception of the nature of the supposed human soul, and also the fallacy of the analogical reasoning upon which the doctrines of its existence and its resurrection were, in a large degree, founded and defended. The man was likened to the larva ("worm of the dust") of the butterfly or any moth ; his body in the grave was likened to the chrysalis of the butterfly in winter awaiting its resurrection in the Spring ; the soul of man was likened to the mature butterfly, resurrected as a beautiful winged being and perfectly happy in its care-free and serene baskings in the glorious sunshine of summer—"in the light of the countenance of the Lord of heaven," the sun ! Beautiful as poetic fancy ; but as science or philosophy, it is fatally defective, for the larva does not die when it enters its winter tomb to await as a living chrysalis its resurrection at "the end of the world" (year). The larva that actually dies, as man dies, never becomes a chrysalis, much less a butterfly ; and the chrysalis that dies and decays as a man's body disintegrates in the grave never becomes a butterfly.

There is, however, real analogy between the life of a man and that of a butterfly, but it contradicts the doctrine of the soul and its survival of bodily death. Man as a foetus—a child before birth—is in a stage analogous to the larval and chrysalic stages ; when he reaches the ad-

ult age he has reached the butterfly stage, before death, not after it—the mature stage in which both butterfly and man perform their reproductive functions, after which man and the butterfly alike prosaically and actually die!

But the Greek words *psyche* and *logos* have, in the evolution of human speech, become amalgamated and modified so as to form the English word psychology, with the modern meaning of *science of mind*. The only defect I can see in this definition is that it is premature—the science of mind is as yet only in the chrysalis state. For this reason I give little credence, on the one hand or on the other, to the testimony of the “old” or “orthodox” psychology. But some progress is being made in mind-investigation, and the real scientists have arrived at the truth that psychology is not a unique, independent general or generic science, but a sub-science—only a branch of physiology. As such, I have already quite fully discussed its bearings on the question of a future life in the sections criticising Thomson Jay Hudson’s hypotheses, those under head of “The Physiological View,” and incidentally in other sections here and there. Hence, little need be said here of the psychological view; but I think there are yet a few points deserving of attention.

#### § 91.—THE SUBSTANCE OF MIND OR “SOUL.”

Elsewhere in these papers I have maintained that the “substance” (that which stands under) all the phenomena of the universe is *matter in motion*; and that no spirit, energy or force entity is needed to “cause” the activity of matter, organic or inorganic, because its activity is incessant—can be neither initiated (created) nor annihilated—the apparent beginning and ending of activity being in reality transmutations of the *modes of motion*

from one into another. Mind is a phenomenon of nature, a part or mode of the cosmic activity; therefore, under my definition of the substance of the cosmos or universe, the substance of mind (or "soul") is *matter in motion*.—Mind is a mode of activity resulting from a transmutation from other antecedent modes and disappearing by transmutation into other succeeding modes of activity. Activity in the aggregate never begins or ends; but the *modes* of activity do constantly begin and end, constituting the varied phenomena of nature. Mind, or soul, is a mode of activity, and has beginning and ending—begins at transmutation from the heat, electricity, chemic and vital modes of brain tissue as a result of brain-tissue disintegration by means of oxygen, and ends by transmutation into the various modes of activity which are the results of desire, design, etc. Hence, in this light, it appears impossible that the existence of individualized mind could be eternal, or continue even a moment after the dissolution of the brain; or that mind could exist independent of its "substance," *matter in motion*.

#### § 92.—PSYCHIC REVELATIONS.

Certain persons, forming an inconsiderable exception in the totality of the race, have claimed special powers of psychic discernment independent of the material organs of the specialized senses, and of late have assumed the class cognomen of "psychics." These psychics are persons in whom the subjective, or reflex, mentation is abnormally merged into the objective mentation. I say "abnormally," because this merging of the two modes of mentation to a certain extent is normal and common to all mankind. For instance, take memory. You observe a certain object or occurrence today, and for some

minutes afterward you consciously keep in your objective thought an image of the thing or the occurrence; this is purely objective or conscious memory. At length you cease thinking of—that is consciously retaining the image of—the object or occurrence, but tomorrow you may again form an image of the object or event, which new image is *re-collected* memory—you will then say “I recollect it.” We cannot collect or re-collect that which no longer exists; hence that which we can recollect must still exist—that is, the mental image (memory) of an object or event exists subconsciously up to the time we recollect it. This is subjective or subconscious memory, and is entirely a product of the objective mind’s image, not of direct observation—that is, of “suggestion”; and such subjective image or subconscious memory has nothing whatever to do with the truth or falsity of its relation to objective reality. It never “goes back of the returns” supplied to it by the objective mentation. If the original conscious image is false to fact you will recollect a falsity from the subconscious memory when you again consciously remember it. And association of innumerable subconscious images or memories results in more or less confusion or intermingling in the course of time, so that a recollection of things or events observed a long time previously is never quite true to the original image; we “get things mixed,” as we say when with difficulty trying to recollect something of the long ago. Even our dreams—subjective images formed while asleep—often become mingled or confused with images that had come from objective observation, and we are sometimes unable to decide whether a certain recollection is true to fact, or whether we “just dreamed it.”

Now for the application: The images re-collected by



the professed psychics or so-called seers are but recollections of subconscious images (memories) originally received by suggestion from the conscious thought of the psychic himself or that of others. That is, the psychic "revelations" are but reflections of the conscious opinions, beliefs or theories of the psychic, or persons—authors, speakers or friends—who have made forcible impressions upon his subjective mentation; briefly, they are reflex thoughts, opinions and images or mental pictures. I have arrived at this conclusion from a pretty thorough study of the writings of two of the greatest of the seers of modern times, Emanuel Swedenborg and Andrew Jackson Davis, confirmed by observation of lesser lights and my own personal experience.

Swedenborg is a wonderful example of reflex thinking from autosuggestion. He was a man of more than ordinary intellectual ability, by both nature and education; he was a devout Christian, but his strong, educated intellect balked at the contradictions, inconsistencies and absurdities of the Bible and the orthodox Christian religion, and he became a unique heretic. But for the mistake of placing confidence in his psychic "visions," he would have been a radical Rationalist. As it was, the suggestions of early religious teaching and much reading of the Bible were mingled and confused with the autosuggestions of his enlightened objective intellect, resulting in recollections, by an abnormal assertiveness of his subconscious mentation, in mongrel "visions" which he mistakenly accepted as "revelations" of spirit-world realities. His pictures of Jesus as God, of Heaven and Hell, of the Great Judgment, etc., were painted in the colors of early training mixed with the oil of a great intellect and applied with the brush of a wonderfully facile and

prolific literary talent. And on the sandy foundation of that mistake has been erected a church—"Church of the New Jerusalem," a Christian sect of a considerable number of adherents.

Andrew Jackson Davis was a psychic who began when an illiterate boy by abnormally reflecting the suggestions of a mesmerizer who experimented upon him, and who unconsciously imparted to him the substance of his earlier visions and recorded them as they were re-collected and "revealed" objectively by his subject. Swedenborg founded a system of Christian theology; Andrew Jackson Davis founded what he called "The Harmonial Philosophy," an effort to systemize a philosophical Spiritualism; both of these seers claimed to have obtained the alleged facts upon which they founded their systems by personal observations in the spirit world; but the alleged facts of the one contradict those of the other, and therefore one or the other was mistaken—probably both. The "Heaven and Hell" of Swedenborg is far different from the "Summerland" of A. J. Davis, and the theology of the one is utterly inharmious with the "philosophy" of the other. And so with all the revelations of all the other psychics or seers, from Mohammed and John the Revelator to the spiritual mediums of today.

The descriptions they profess (often sincerely) to give of life "over there" are, I am convinced, obtained from suggestions they have subconsciously accepted *over here*.

#### § 93.—KNOCKING DOWN A MAN OF STRAW.

It is easy to mis-state an opponent's argument and then demolish the counterfeit. Over and over, I have heard and read the statement that the "materialist says that mind is the product of the brain—the brain secretes

thought as the liver secretes bile"! This charge can come only from one either very ignorant or brazenly dishonest, for no well-informed believer in the theory that mind is the function of the brain, and thought, emotion, sentiment, etc., are brain products, would assert that the "brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile." Everyone who knows even the a-b-c's of physiology knows that the word "secretion" is a name for only one class of physiological functions—the functions of certain glands and membranes. The brain is neither a gland nor a membrane; the products of secretion are fluids or semi-fluids, but mind and thought are neither of these.

Physiological functions are many and extremely varied in character, and the same is true of physiological products. Note the extreme dissimilarity between muscular motion and nerve sensation; between seeing and hearing; between breathing and mastication; between secretion of milk and the act of smelling, etc. Compare the products of functioning: saliva with locomotion; fat or oil with a feeling of pain or pleasure; bone with blood; brain with finger-nails, etc. It would be just as logical to say that the eye secretes sight, the muscles secrete motion; the tongue secretes speech, "as the liver secretes bile," as to say "the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile."

To my mind it is no more mysterious or improbable that thought is a product of brain than that the sense of touch is the product of sensory nerves; or, than that the movement of my arm, hand and fingers in setting this type is a product of muscle in combination with motor nerves and brain. No: although mind is a function of brain and thought a product of that function, the brain does *not*

“secrete” it as the liver does bile, and that product, bile is no more like thought than it is like muscular motion.

§ 94.—ANOTHER BASELESS OBJECTION

Is this: “Immediately after death the brain is in no way different, organically, physically or chemically, from its condition immediately before; if thought is a product of brain, why does not the brain continue to think after death, if the mind or soul has not left it?” There is no mystery here. First, it is a mere assumption that the brain structure is *exactly* the same immediately after as it was before death; no chemist ever analyzed, and no microscopist ever peered into, the living cells of a thinking brain, and therefore no exact comparison of it with a dead brain can be made. Second, soundness of the brain structure is not the *only* condition of thought production; *oxygen* must be present to disintegrate the brain structure, for thought, like all other physiological products, is a sequence of cell-dissolution. The surest—an infallible—way to extinguish thinking and consciousness is to *stop the breathing*—and death always does that!

After the flame of a candle “goes out” because oxygen of the air has been shut off from it, the candle itself remains as before, yet no light is produced. Is it not as logical to ask what becomes of the flame and its light when the “candle goes out” as to ask what becomes of the soul—the mind and its thought when the body dies? Furthermore, every other organ and function of the body *yields a product* of some kind; in compliance with this law, what does brain and brain action produce if not mind, including thought, sentiment, emotion etc.?

## CHAPTER XI.

### SOME MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS.

#### § 96.—“WEIGHING THE SOUL.”

TEN THOUSAND years ago, more and less, the inhabitants of the Valley of the Nile had in their wonderfully complicated and systemetized mythology or religion a symbolical representation of the gods weighing on a balance the human soul after the death of the body. In this case the soul's existence was not questioned, the weighing being for the purpose of determining the moral status of the soul—a detail of the “Great Judgment.” But in this modern day certain doctors, self-styled scientists, more familiar with the weighing of malmedicaments than of morals, have undertaken to weigh the soul for the purpose of proving its existence. And they report that their experiments in weighing a large number of dying persons determine that “something,” weighing an ounce, more less, “escapes” from the body at the exact moment of death, and that not having been able to detect any loss of the known bodily constituents at the time, they conclude that the “thing” which seems to “escape” is the human “soul”!

This logic reminds me of some boys who once went out to hunt “winged bunnies,” mythical animals described in a story book and said to hide in hollow logs during the day and come out in the evening to fly out of sight high

up in the sky. They found a hollow log about twenty feet long, and peering into one end they could see nothing within, nor see light through the hollow though the hole was open at both ends of the log. Says one: "That's a mighty good place for a winged bunny to stay in in day-time." So they got a long pole and tried to dislodge the beast they had decided ought to be within. They saw nothing come out of the log, but now (having dislodged the obstructing rotten wood with their pole) they could see through the hollow log. So they went home and told their boy friends how they had proved that there were real "winged bunnies," for they saw no other animal run out of the bunny-house, while "something" seemed, unseen, "to escape"—it could only be a real, though a very light-weight, "winged bunny"!

These doctors have "proved" too much for a certain large number of believers in the existence of soul-entities. Their experiments on animals showed that "nothing" escapes from their bodies at death—therefore they do not have souls; and, again, their discovered "fact" that the soul has weight "proves" that it is of material substance, which is "rank materialism"! Incidentally, I observe, their experiments "prove" the Christian belief correct, that the soul has wings; for, having weight, how could it otherwise ascend to the heaven in the skies?

I can scarcely resist the great temptation to say here that the report that the soul weighs only an ounce or two seems to confirm common observation that many people, if they have any at all, have very "small souls"!

#### § 96.—THE EVASIVE EXPLANATION.

In the discussion of the question of immortality there has been adopted by some an explanation that, to my

way of thinking, is simply an evasion of the real issue—an explanation which all accept in its true sphere, without relinquishing their belief or disbelief in a conscious personal future life connected by memory with this life.

This explanation is a favorite one with some who have been forced by facts and reason to give up their belief in a literal future life, but who wish to avoid giving a shock to the prejudices of the great majority by a plain, unevasive, unequivocal declaration. The motive may be commendable, but science, like nature, which it represents, is severely and unfeelingly exact, and sets forth the absolute truth utterly regardless of consequences. The scientist inquires as to what *is*, not merely as to what gives him no pain. The dying philosopher says to his physician, "Tell me truly, is this death?" He does not ask for an equivocal or palliative reply; he does not want to be merely assured that "there is no death"—his common sense as well as his science teaches him that death is as real as are birth and life. He knows that the simple acts of daily self-abnegation in man's association with man which we call ethics and etiquette are but expressions of the great biological law that one must sacrifice some of his self-interests, including his life, that another may live. And he bravely and *politely* steps aside and lies down in the grave to give standing-room for his brother.

The evasive answer to the great question is, in brief, this: "We are immortal; all our acts will continue to affect the weel or wo of humanity forever: we shall continue to live in the memory and affections of our friends and posterity, if deserving." This, as I understand them, is the kind of "immortality" which Dr. Paul Carus, of the *Open Court* and the *Monist*, believes in, and my friend Prof. Thaddeus B. Wakeman "knows" is the only

future life, as he says "correlation" proves—for he assures me that "a little more 'correlation' might save you [me] from agnosticism." (See his letter in the HUMANITARIAN REVIEW for July, 1907).

Though this is *one* definition of the word immortality, it is not the primary meaning of the word, but a secondary—poetic—one, or a mere rhetorical figure of speech. It does not answer the real question persistently asked by the prosaic, matter-of-fact scientists and common-sense millions. They ask:

"Does the personality, the conscious identity and the memory of the events and the friendships of this life continue or sometime revive after the death and disintegration of the material body?" And they demand a positive, unevasive, unequivocal, unambiguous and sincere answer—Yes, No, or Unknown—with the facts and principles upon which the answer is based equally explicit.

As the judge upon the bench says: "Gentlemen of the jury, what is your verdict?" What is the answer in this case? Some of the jurymen would answer "Yes," some "No," some, "We are in doubt," but the foreman is bound to formally answer, regardless of his own personal decision, "If Your Honor please, the jury fails to agree." We have heard the "Yes" and the "No" to this question, with the reasons; let us now hear the "Unknown."

#### § 97.—THE AGNOSTIC VIEW.

It may be laid down, I think, as a true general principle that he who knows most knows how little he knows, and he who thinks he knows much has not learned how little he actually *knows*. The wise man is modest; the fool is deceived by his own ignorance and his egotism. Especially rare is *knowledge* of what the future may bring



to pass. No person knows, even, that the sun will rise tomorrow as usual ; for aught we know it might ere that time explode and be rent into impalpable "star-dust," its volume expanded far beyond the earth's orbit.

Much that we say we know is rightly so expressed if it is conditional. We can only judge of the future by the past ; that which has hitherto invariably occurred in the field of human observation in the past we know will under the same conditions occur in the future, and we may rightly say we *know* that a certain event will occur if we include the provision of the essential conditions, for *conditions are laws of nature*. To say every event occurs in conformity to natural law is only to affirm that they occur according to essential conditions.

What do we know about conditions essential to a continuation of the personality after bodily death ? Do we know that such conditions exist ?—or that they do not exist ? Does our realm of observation and experience in this life embrace every realm of existence in nature ? If not, can we know what may or may not exist outside of the field of our observation and experience ? Have we discovered all the laws of nature ? Or have we learned the limitations of all the laws we have discovered ?

What is agnosticism ? Many of its opponents ridicule agnostics as people who acknowledge they know nothing. Such a charge can come only from one who is ignorant of the modern meaning of the word—that is, of the limitations of its application as used by those who profess to be agnostic—or from one who is dishonest and unfair toward his opponents in argument. I define the word agnosticism thus: The belief that mankind can and does *know nothing* as to what may or may not exist outside of the field of its experience and observation ; that what we

learn by reasoning is but a generalization of facts within our observation and experience and deductions therefrom. Hence the agnostic rejects the dogma that man can, does or ever did, obtain any knowledge by inspiration, intuition or supernatural revelation; and accordingly he confesses that he does not, and denies that anybody else does, know that there exist or do not exist invisible beings ("gods") superior to man, and confesses that he does not, and denies that anybody else does, know that men do or do not continue to live after bodily death as invisible, intangible conscious persons. He says "we do not *know* of these things; we may believe, hope, doubt and disbelieve, but that is all."

This section on the Agnostic View I will close with an exceedingly appropriate quotation from a great American Agnostic, Col. Robert G. Ingersoll:

"We do not know—we cannot say, whether death is a wall or a door—the beginning or the end of a day; the spreading of pinions to soar, or the folding forever of wings; the rise or the set of a sun, or an endless life that brings rapture and love to everyone."

This is the view of the agnostic expressed in the language of the poet.

#### § 98.—PSYCHIC RESEARCH SOCIETY'S CONCLUSION.

Many of my correspondents have kindly referred me to the proceedings of the Society for Psychic Research, of London, and its American Branch, and suggesting to me that these societies have a membership largely of scientists—i. e., men of more or less eminence in the various branches of natural science and familiar, in theory and practice, with the justly much-esteemed "modern-science method of investigation"—and that their very extensive

research in psychical phenomena had resulted in convincing many if not all of the members that a personal spirit life after death of the body is a demonstrable fact.

In reply, I beg permission to say that I have been familiar with the Society's work for the past eight years, through careful reading of its official reports as well as certain unofficial reports of some of its more eminent members. I have not space here to comment at length upon the Society's methods, inferences and deductions, but I will make a brief general statement of what I conceive to be some very grave defects in the experimentation and the reasoning of its investigators.

To do this concretely, I will take for comment the report of a recent interview by John Elfreth Watkins, published as a syndicate magazine article. Prof. James H. Hyslop, "late of the faculty of the Columbia University, and now secretary and active head of the new American Society for Psychical Research," was the gentleman Mr. Watkins interviewed. He is an eminent psychologist, and has long been prominently active in connection with the late F. W. H. Myers, Dr. Hodgson, George Pelham, Stainton Moses and other well-known active researchers of the older Societies. I do this not because Prof. Hyslop is particularly vulnerable, but because he is an able representative of those Societies, including the new one, and because in this interview he gives utterance to the most recent reports on psychic research and in which the objectionable features I wish to point out are shown to be still in existence.

First, Prof. Hyslop (and the others) fail to recognize the psychological principle that telepathy, mental induction, pertains not to the domain of objective or conscious mentation, but to that of the subjective, subconscious

or reflexive mentation. Hence, while he carefully provides safeguards against any objective communication of information from the "sitters" to the medium, he makes no attempt to prevent information being obtained by the medium from the sitters, himself or his stenographer, by subconscious mental induction, or "telepathy." This is evidenced by the following words of the Professor himself :

"I wore a black mask covering my face from my forehead to below my beard when I began to visit Mrs. Piper. I remained masked in this way for a year, and thus hid my identity from her until after the principal results of the experiment had been obtained. But in these new experiments I am not the 'sitter.' Strangers are introduced to the mediums, but not until the latter have gone into the trance state and their eyes have been hidden in the head rest described. I simply sit in the room and observe the experiment. There is also present, invariably, a stenographer, who makes notes, absolutely verbatim, of everything which occurs. The sitters are generally selected from a class that have shown some psychic tendencies. They are always taken out of the room before the mediums come out of the trance state. Their personalities are never known to the medium."

Prof. Hyslop could scarcely have designed better plans for having himself deceived than those he here describes. All of his supposed precautions but helped to establish essential conditions for subconscious mental induction between the medium and the sitter ; for suppression of the activity of the senses—the organs of objective perception—is exactly what is required to enable subjective perception to more perfectly supercede the objective. This is the reason for the dark circle, quietude and harmonious thought of spiritualistic seances. When objective men-

tation ebbs, subjective mentation flows, and *vice versa*. It is a gross error for a psychologist to mistake *sub-consciousness* for *unconsciousness*. The entranced psychic is not *unconscious*, but subjectively *hyperconscious*, and exceedingly suggestible. Indeed the suggestibility is so exaggerated that Prof. Hyslop's mask and attempt to conceal his identity would be accepted suggestively and acted upon, not to betray him, but to consistently co-incide with him in maintaining his "part" or *role*—for these psychic performances are identical with those of theatrical acting, and every great histrionic genius is a psychic and always in a psychic condition when truly impersonating. And so of the "strangers" so carefully "introduced" and taken out of the room while the medium is in the trance state. They were faithfully accepted by the star actress in their *role* of strangers bearing assumed names; nevertheless she knew *their* parts as well as her own, just as Juliet on the stage knows the part of Romeo and his real personality as well. Romeo is fully conscious that off the boards his Juliet is Miss Mary Jones, "best girl" of John Smith of Pumpkinville. And so the medium knows the sitters are only acting, and while recognizing them as "strangers" in the play, their real off-stage, objective personality is of no consequence to her; her part is to assume any personality they, consciously or subconsciously suggest to her; and by virtue of her psychic state of exaggerated suggestibility, through mental induction, she reproduces such "secret" facts of that personality as are known, consciously or even only subconsciously, to the sitters and interested observers.

Note that I use the word "induction" as used by electricians, and that I do not consider the "play" of the psychic any more immoral than that of the actor.

The Professor states that he selects persons of psychic tendencies as sitters—exactly the 'thing to do to supply conditions favorable to successful mental induction.

And furthermore: Prof. Hyslop is too positive in his statements that he "had never heard of" certain events of which a medium told him. He seems not to be aware of the fact that information received "telepathically," i. e., by mental induction, from a sitter, interested spectator or others, by a psychic, receives it, not from that person's objective or conscious thought or active memory, but from his subjective or subconscious thought or dormant memory—the same source from which one re-collects or recalls something to conscious memory. And one can seldom be positively certain that he has never heard or read a thing because unable to recollect it. How often we are unable to recollect things that we know we have heard—the name of a friend, title of a book, etc.! And who has not re-read a book or a letter and found things he cannot remember ever to have read therein before?

Asked if the immortality of the soul had been proven to his satisfaction by his experiments, he replied:

"My position is that the only acceptable hypothesis which can account for certain phenomena that I have observed is that of survival after death. The balance of evidence, so far, leaves the spiritistic hypothesis as the only rational one to which we can hold at present."

Note that the Professor did not say "proved to my satisfaction," but he calls it a "hypothesis" to be held only tentatively. And this may be accepted as a fair statement of the general conclusion, at present, of the societies for psychical research.

[Error—page 157: "§ 96" should read § 95.]

## CHAPTER XII.

### RECAPITULATION AND CONCLUSION.

#### § 99.—RECAPITULATION.

In the Introductory chapter I defined the *real question* as, not simply is man destined to a future life ? but does the *personality*, consciousness of identity, memory of the events and friendships of this life and the recognition of friends continue in a future life ? It was shown that there are three principal theories of future life : 1, A life of the same body after resurrection ; 2, a life of the soul or spirit by reincarnations ; 3, an independent spirit life, the material body being abandoned at its death forever.

It was shown in chapter ii. that the resurrection theory is the sequence of an ancient poetic fancy that all living things "died" in the "fall of the year," were buried in the grave of winter, and were resurrected at the vernal equinox, the "spring of the year"—the springing-up season ; and affirming, by a sort of poetic logic, analogy between this natural phenomenon and that of the course of a human life, the inference was drawn that the body of man would be resurrected at a certain epoch in time. That science demonstrates the impossibility of any resurrection of the material body except as the elements of other and succeeding plant, animal and human bodies—a real, scientific re-carnation, shown in chapter iii. to be the fact basis of the visionary theory of re-incarnation.

In ch. iv. I have discussed the spiritistic theory of some N. Testament writers and various metaphysical cults ; and in ch. v., spiritism as a working hypothesis was discussed and its inadequacy, I think, demonstrated ; this involved a quite thorough treatment of free will, determinism, and

persistence of motion vs. force, spirit, or other uncaused cause of natural phenomena. In ch. vi. the dualistic mechanical theory was briefly commented upon as a sophistical analogy; and Prof. Haeckel's alleged monism was pretty thoroughly discussed and shown, I believe, to be, after all, not scientific monism, but hypothetical dualism. New Thought theories were discussed in ch. vii., and their mysticism and vagaries briefly pointed out, with a quite extensive critical analysis and refutation of the famous hypotheses of the late Thomson Jay Hudson, L.L.D. Does Spiritualism demonstrate a future life? was given a lengthy treatment in ch. viii., on a basis of facts of record and, especially, of the author's experience, leading to a decidedly negative answer.

In ch. ix., was critically considered some features of so-called philosophy of a future life, showing fallacies of deductive reasoning as a means of obtaining proof of immortality, and the futility of arguments based on human desire, consensus and universality of opinion, moral necessity, etc. The question of a future life from scientific standpoints were quite fully discussed in a long chapter, x., under the sub-headings, (a) the physical, (b) chemical, (c) physiological, and (d) the psychological points of view. In ch. xi. is embraced criticisms of the evasive explanation, a statement of the agnostic view, and critical remarks on some of the methods of the Societies for Psychical Research, with a demonstration of the hypothetical and tentative character of their principal common conclusion, as represented by Prof. James H. Hyslop.

#### § 100.—THE CONCLUSION.

In this quite comprehensive investigation of the alleged evidences of a future life, I find absolutely no facts upon which can be based a *knowledge* that a future life is a certainty, or that it is a probability or even a possibility, and yet this does not positively *prove* that it is not.

And I find no evidence that a future life would be beneficent or *belief* in it an incentive to right conduct. As long as one has even one more breath to draw, a *real* "future life" is before him and he should act accordingly!





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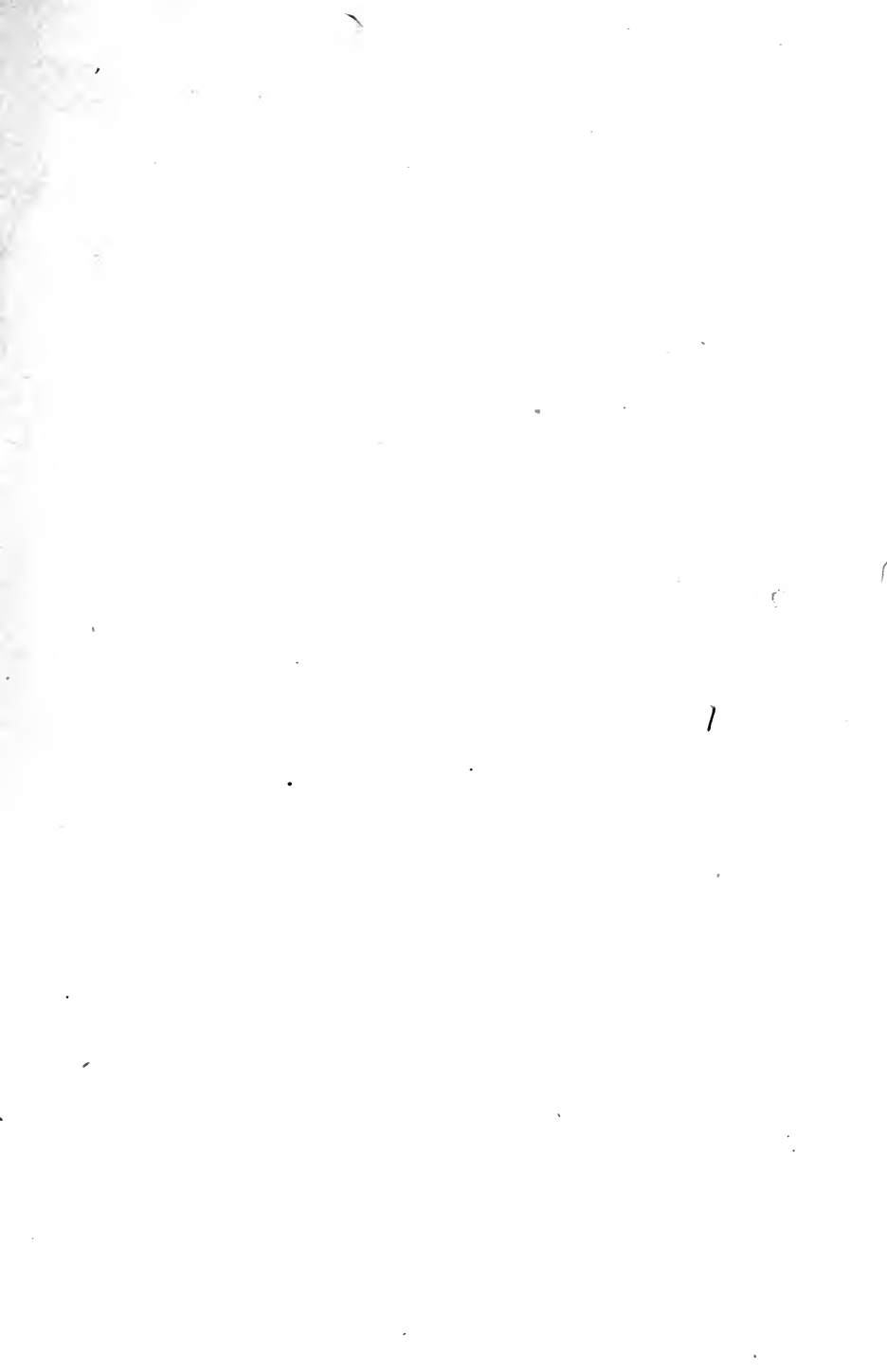
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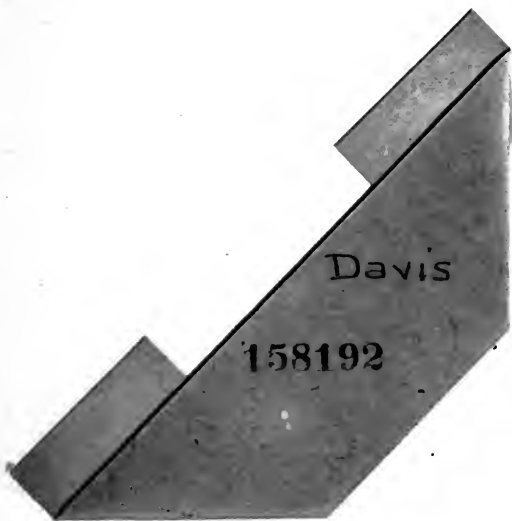
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